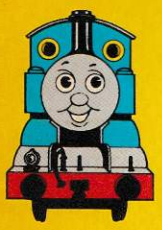
FREE BALLOON!

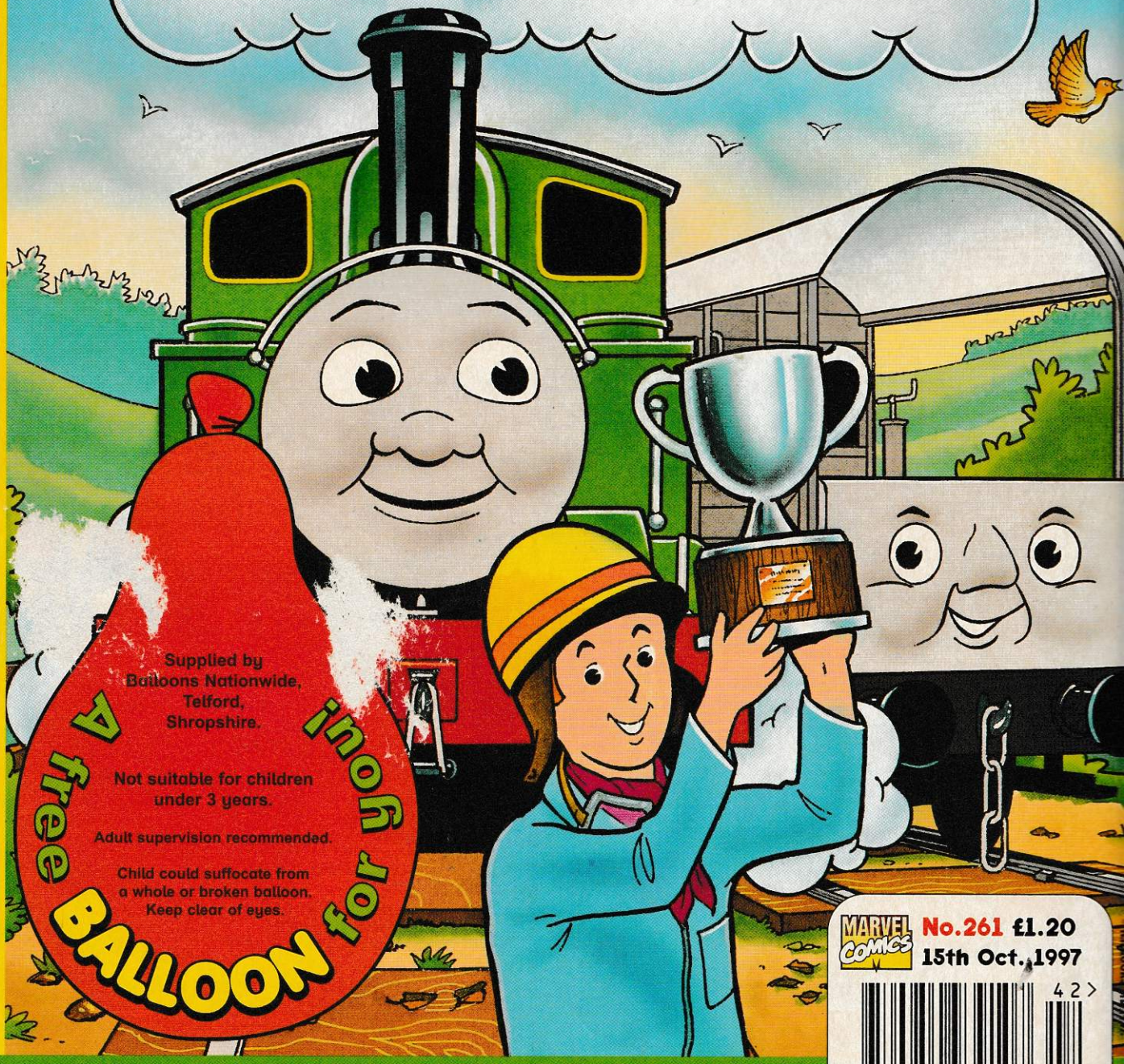
LET'S READ TOGETHER

THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE & FRIENDS™

Based on the Railway Series by The Rev. W. Awdry.



THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE & FRIENDS



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Child could suffocate from a whole or broken balloon. Keep clear of eyes.

MARVEL COMICS No.261 £1.20
15th Oct., 1997

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Puzzles · Reading · Colouring

Hello, everybody!

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Island of Sodor Railway

This comic belongs to

.....

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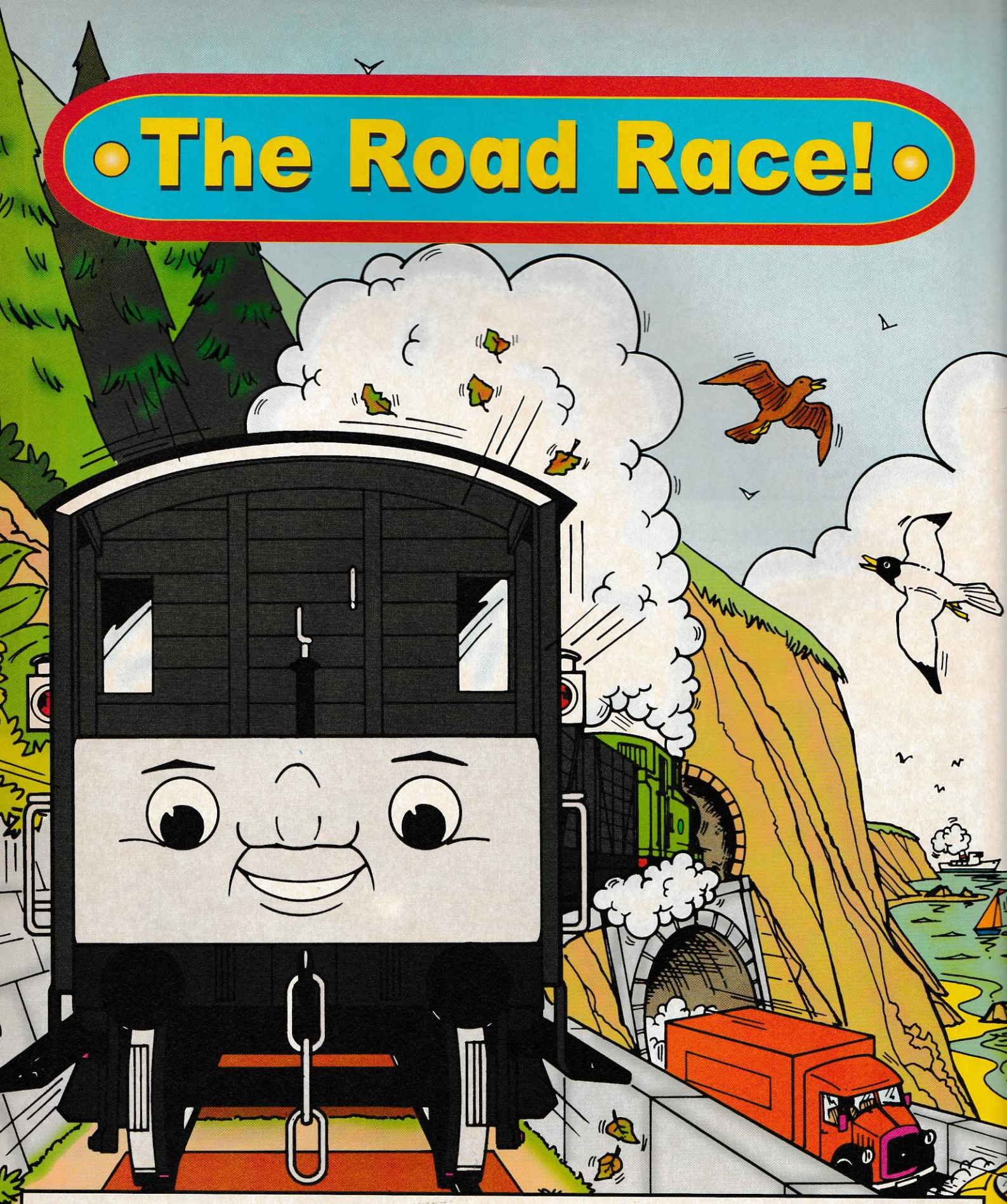
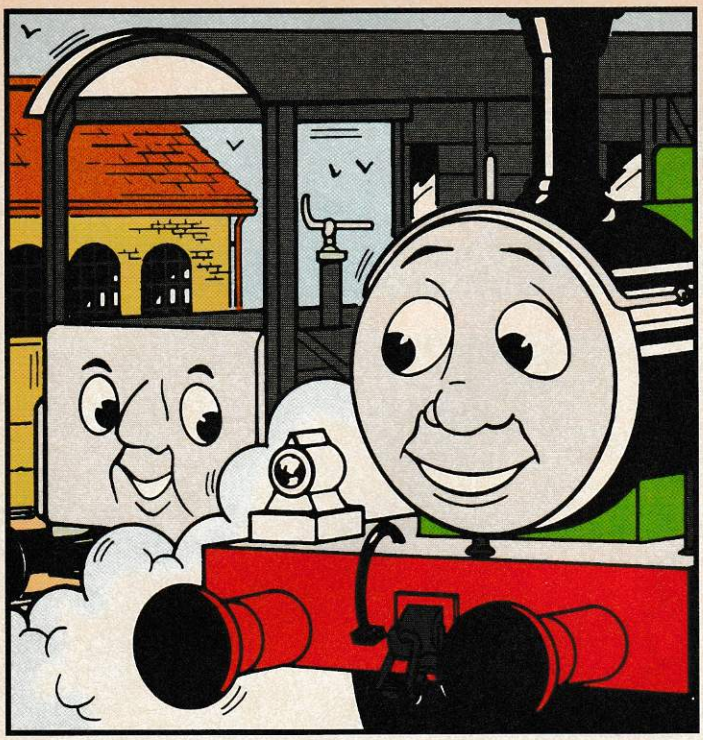
The Road Race!



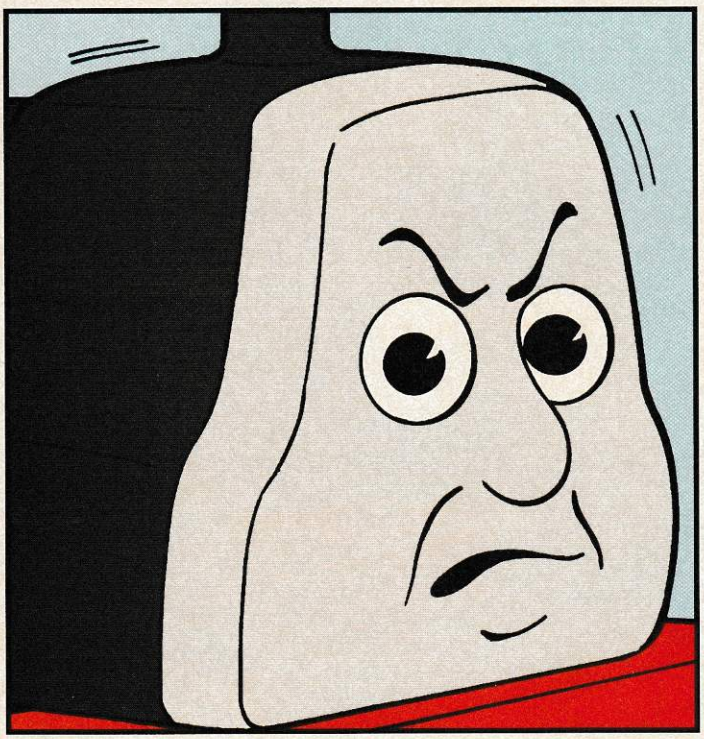
1. Toad the Brake Van had been saved from scrap, just like Oliver. Now they both worked happily together, helping out on Duck's branch line by the sea. But Toad had a secret wish.

2. "If only I could be coupled to a passenger train for once," he sighed, while he rattled along behind lots of freight trucks, as usual. "I want to travel with smart carriages!"



3. When Toad finally told Oliver, the engine smiled. "Whoever heard of such a thing," he said. "Brake vans are used for freight trains. You carry the guard and he's important!"

4. "So I do," said Toad, cheerfully. He forgot all about his wish. Then, one day, Oliver stopped at a level-crossing. George the Steamroller was nearby, helping to repair the road.

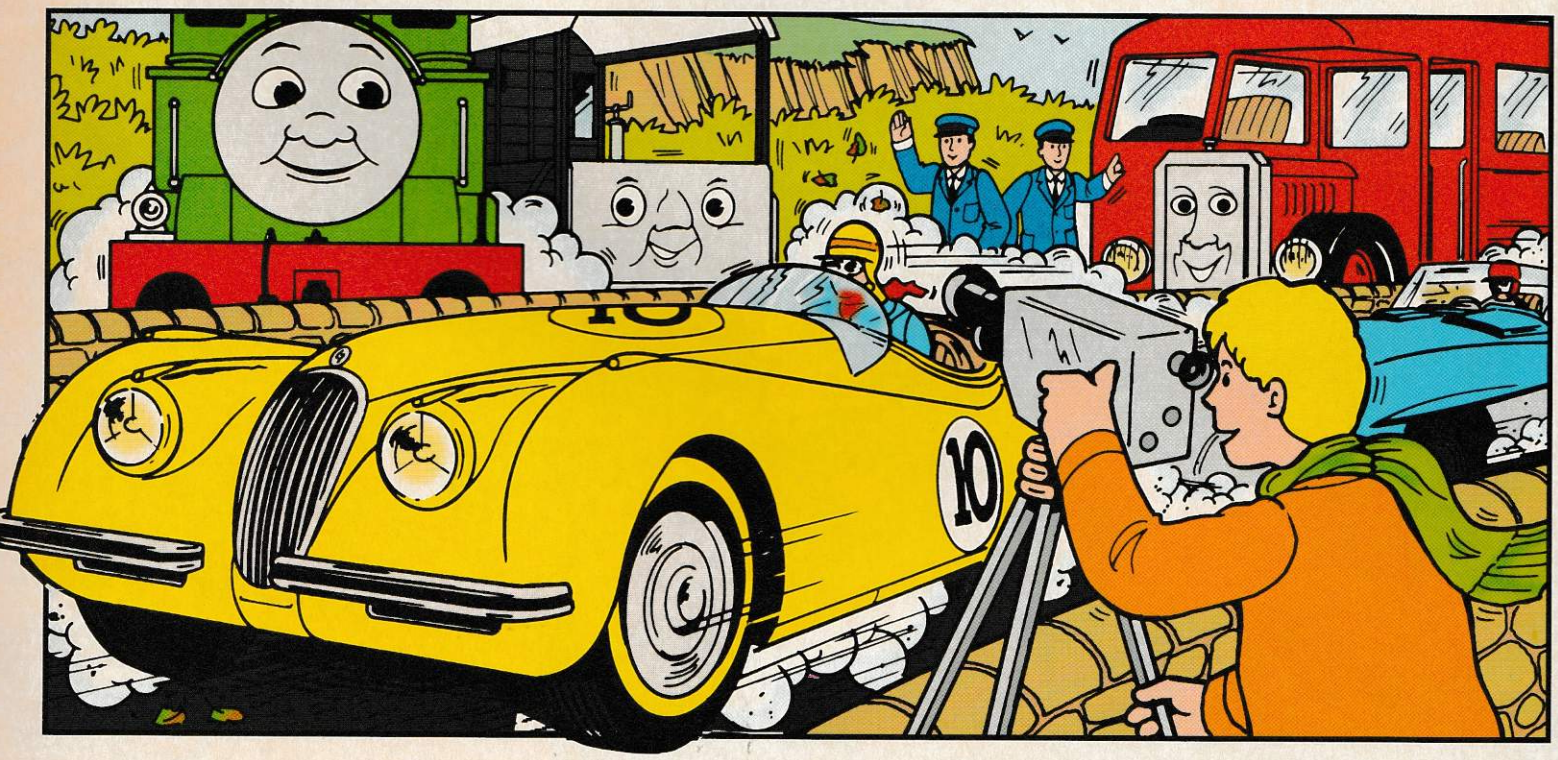


5. "I've always said railways should be scrapped," called grumpy George. "Roads are much more useful. That's why there's going to be a really special road race along here soon."

6. "A likely story!" Oliver laughed as he and Toad got underway again. But a little later, they met Bertie the Bus. "Heard about the road race?" asked Bertie. "I'll be very busy!"

7. Oliver and Toad looked surprised. "Then it is true!" they said. Later, they delivered posters to be put up at every station. "Come to the Island of Sodor Road Race!" the posters read.

8. On the big day, the coast road by Duck's line was closed to traffic, ready for the grand race. Meanwhile, all the drivers and their racing cars had arrived by ship from the Mainland.

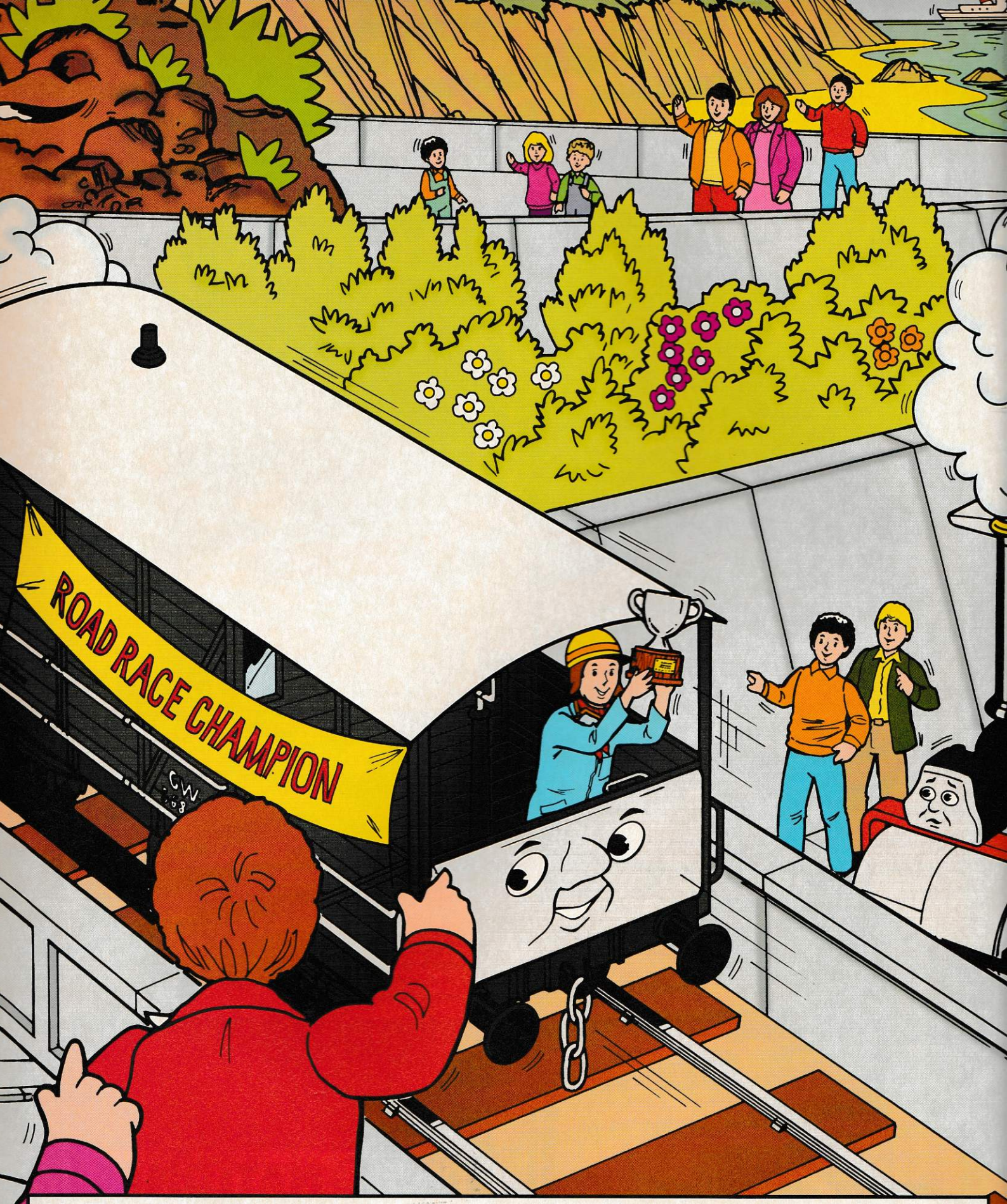


9. Excited crowds gathered along the route as the racing cars lined up at the start. Then a man waved a flag for the race to begin. VROOOM! The cars sped away and everyone cheered.

10. Oliver and Toby watched from a siding. Bertie was parked alongside. "Look!" cried the bus, above the roar of the cars. "Number Ten leads. It's driven by a famous racing driver!"

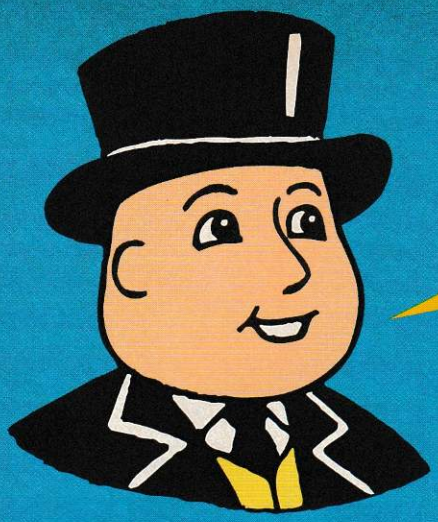
11. The cars roared along straight roads then screeched around bends. Car Number Ten won and its driver was given a silver cup. Everyone on the island wanted to see the winner.

12. The race organisers spoke to the Fat Controller who was watching too. He had an idea. A crane lifted Car Number Ten on to a flat truck that was coupled between Oliver and Toad.



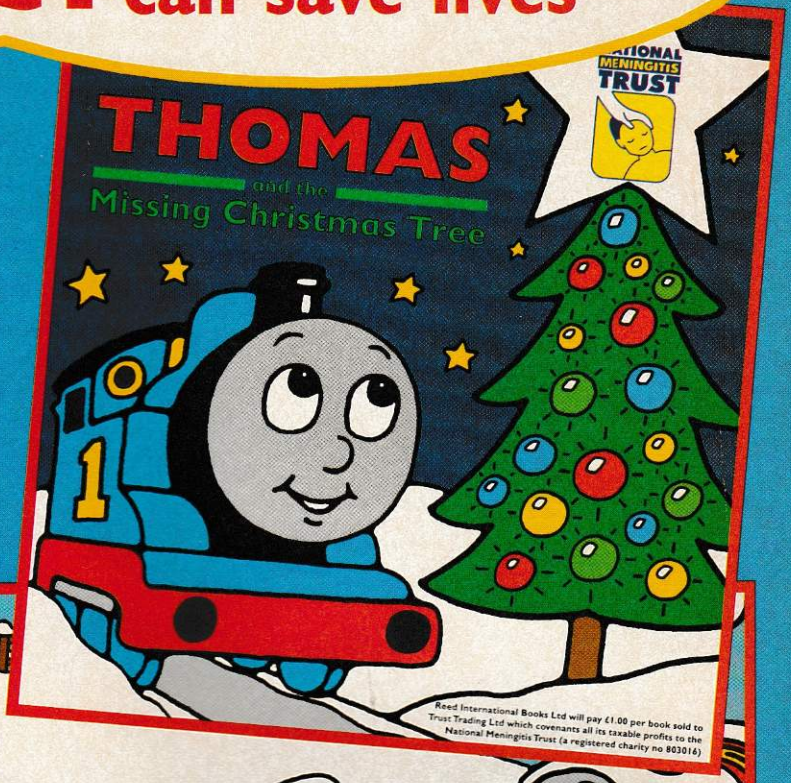
13. The driver climbed aboard the brake van and waved to all the crowds as Oliver set off. "Everyone can easily see him and his car now," called Oliver. Toad was very proud.

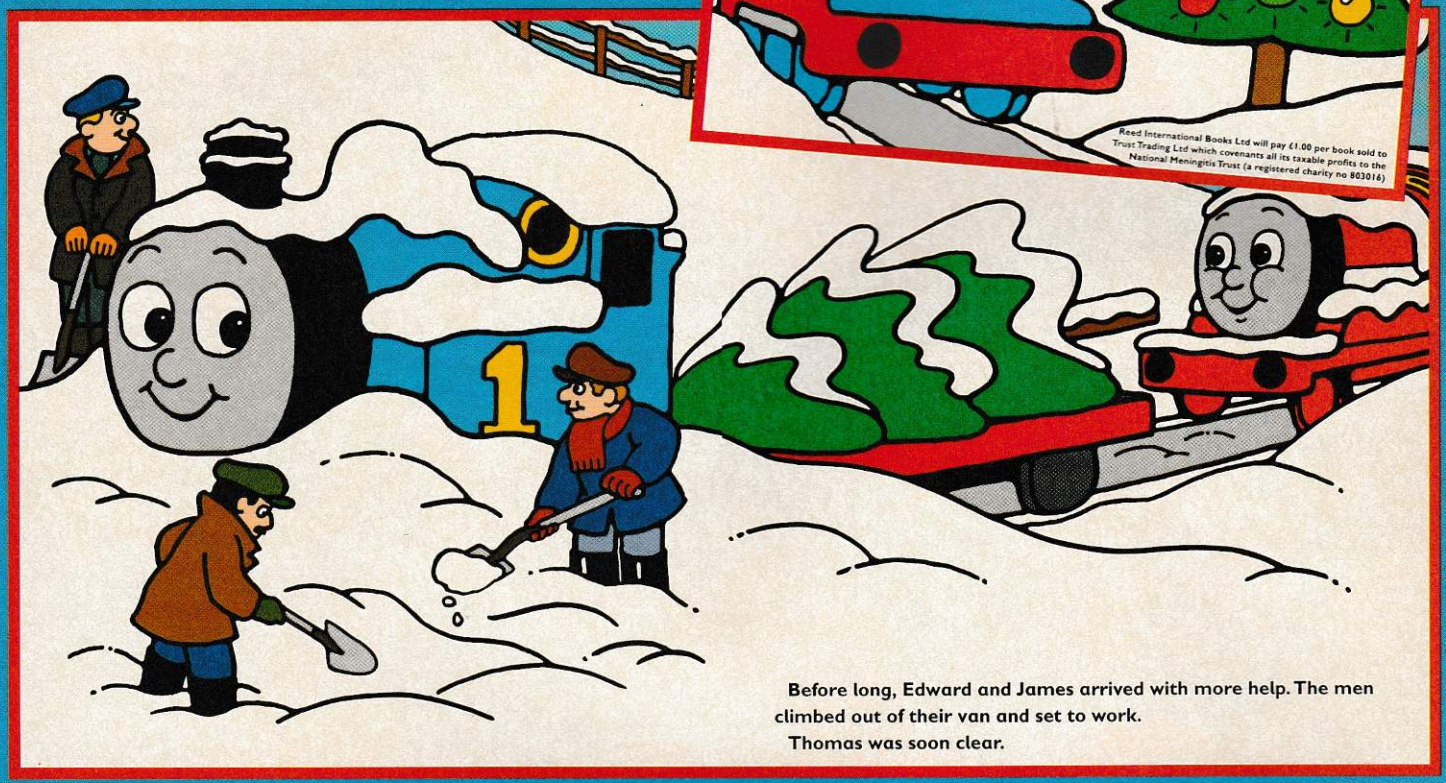
14. When he rolled past Bertie and George, they stared in surprise. "Just think! Me! Carrying a famous passenger!" smiled Toad. "It's more than I could have wished for!"



£1 Buying this book can save lives

This charming Christmas book is being sold for only £1 to benefit the National Meningitis Trust*.





Before long, Edward and James arrived with more help. The men climbed out of their van and set to work. Thomas was soon clear.

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Money* raised from the sales of this book will help provide every GP surgery, hospital, medical school and nursing college in the UK with a Meningitis Resource Pack. These training packs will give health professionals the latest information on the signs, symptoms and treatment of meningitis.

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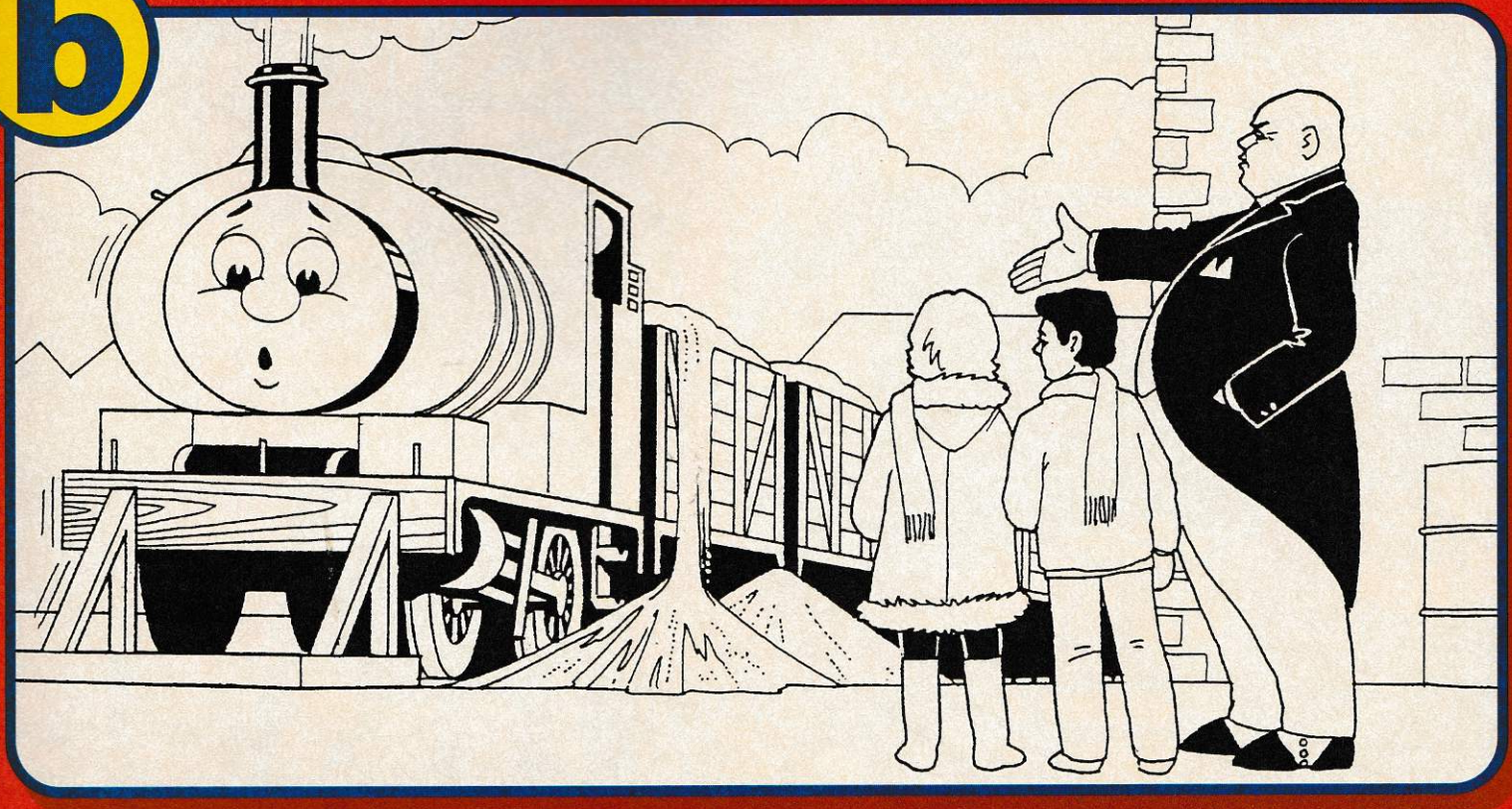
Spot the difference!

These two pages look the same, but there are some tiny differences between them! Can you spot the 5 changes?
When you have found them all, colour in the pictures!

a

b



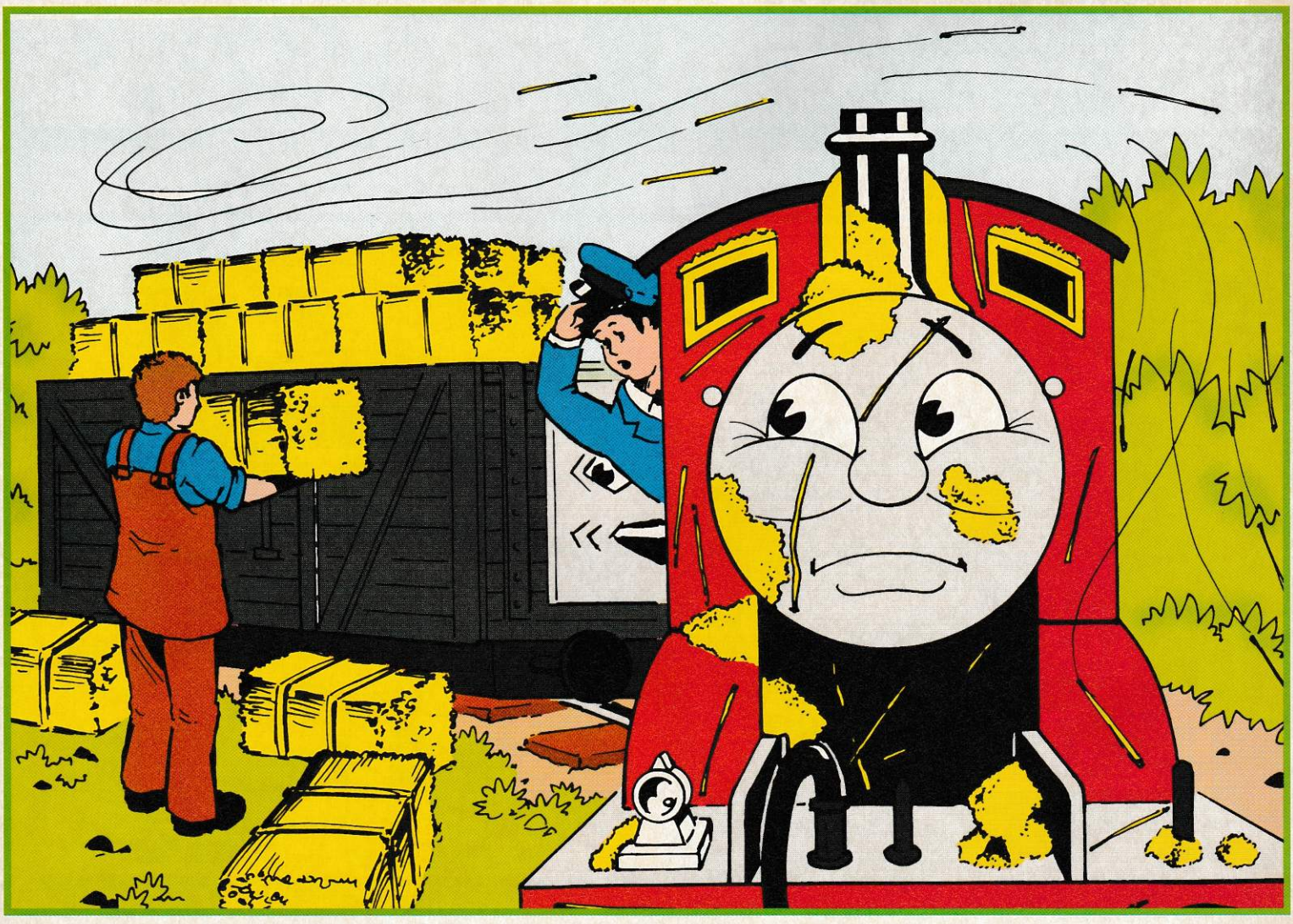
Answers: Percy's brake pipe - Percy's whistle - Percy's porthole - Percy's number - The Fat Controller's hat

A Special job!

One morning, a man, who was waiting at the station, was looking admiringly at James. Then he started to talk with James' driver. "I wish I had a special job like you, driving such a smart steam engine!" he said.

James glowed with pride as his driver asked the man what his job was. "Oh, nothing important, I'm just a window cleaner!" he replied, pointing to his bucket and ladder against the station wall. "Well I think keeping stations clean and smart is a special job too!" said the driver.

Just then, the Fat Controller appeared with news for James. "You'll have some very important passengers this afternoon, so stay as clean as possible, please! They're visitors from the mainland railway and I want to impress them!" he announced.



James was excited about meeting the visitors, but first he had a busy morning of work to do, pulling a mixed goods train. Well, poor James was out of luck!

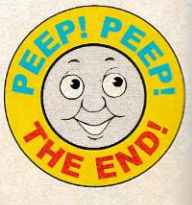
Firstly, he took some trucks to be filled with grain. It started to rain and the wind blew the floury dust around and it stuck to him. Then he went to drop off a delivery of hay. The bales were unloaded in a siding and lots of bits of straw stuck to soaking wet James.

His driver couldn't believe it. "I've never seen you look so scruffy, James, and now we're off to meet the Fat Controller's visitors!" "Whatever will they think of me!" James wailed as he set off for the Main Station. "Full steam ahead!" ordered his driver. "If we get there early, we might have time to clean you up!"

When they arrived, the Fat Controller was shocked to see the state of his prize engine. He was feeling quite cross when, who should show up, but the window cleaner! James' driver instantly had an idea. "We've got a special job for you! Can you make James look as smart as he did this morning? You've got half an hour!" The window cleaner was only too happy to help, "You know how much I like engines!" he grinned.

Then he began to work furiously, using his ladder to reach James' dome and chimney, cleaning him from buffer to buffer. He finished just in time! "You've done a fantastic job for us!" said the relieved Fat Controller, "and, as a reward, you can take a ride in the cab!"

The window cleaner couldn't believe his luck. "My job certainly turned out special today!" he said to James' driver, as a very smart James pulled away.

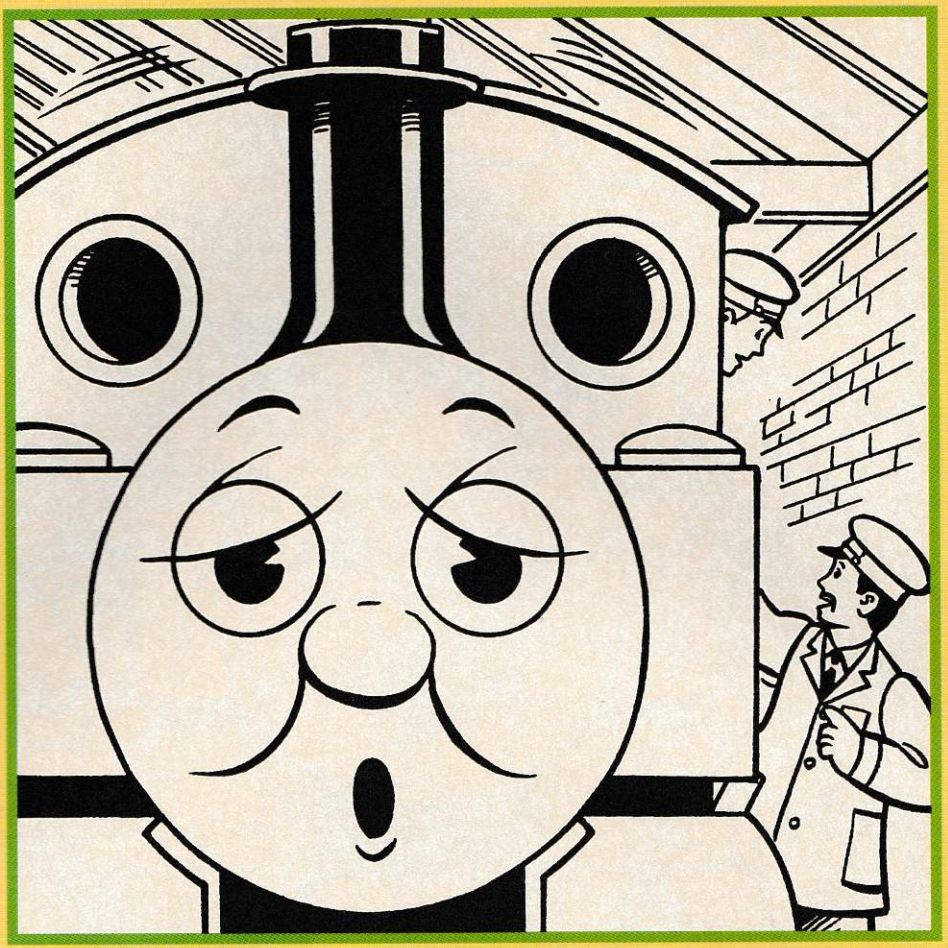


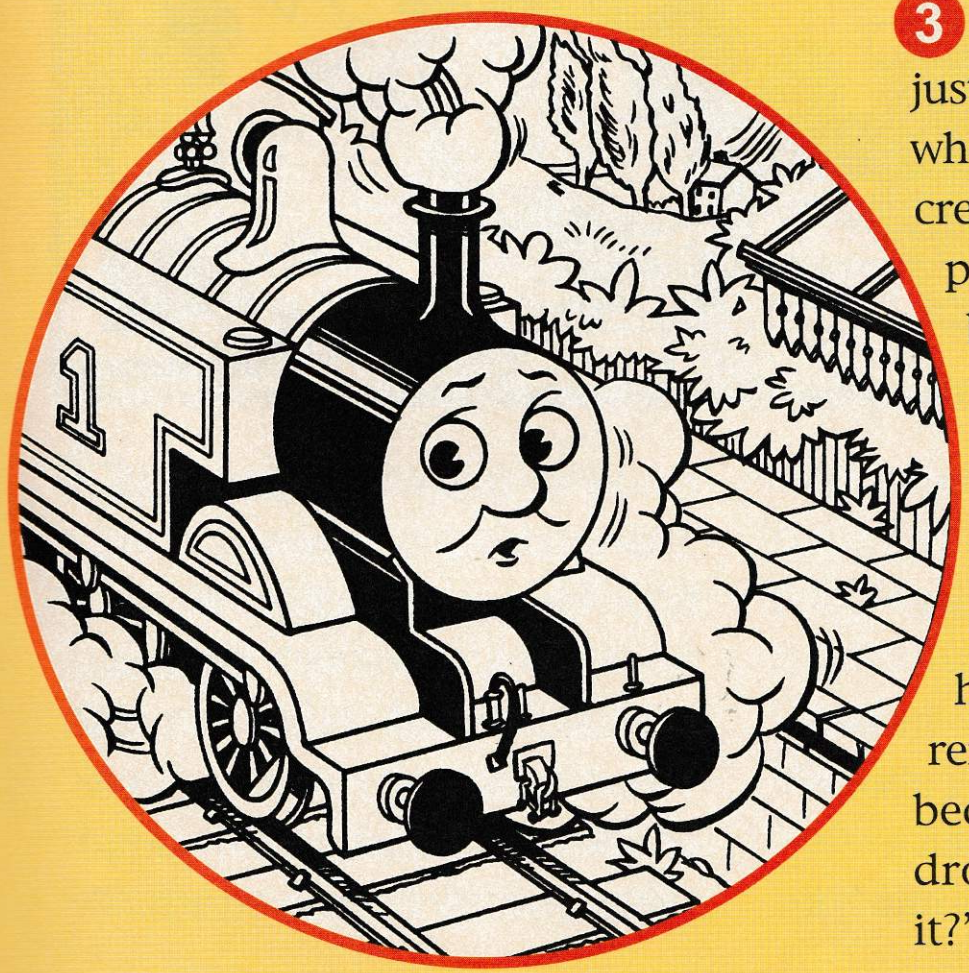
A read & colour story

Thomas' Mistake!

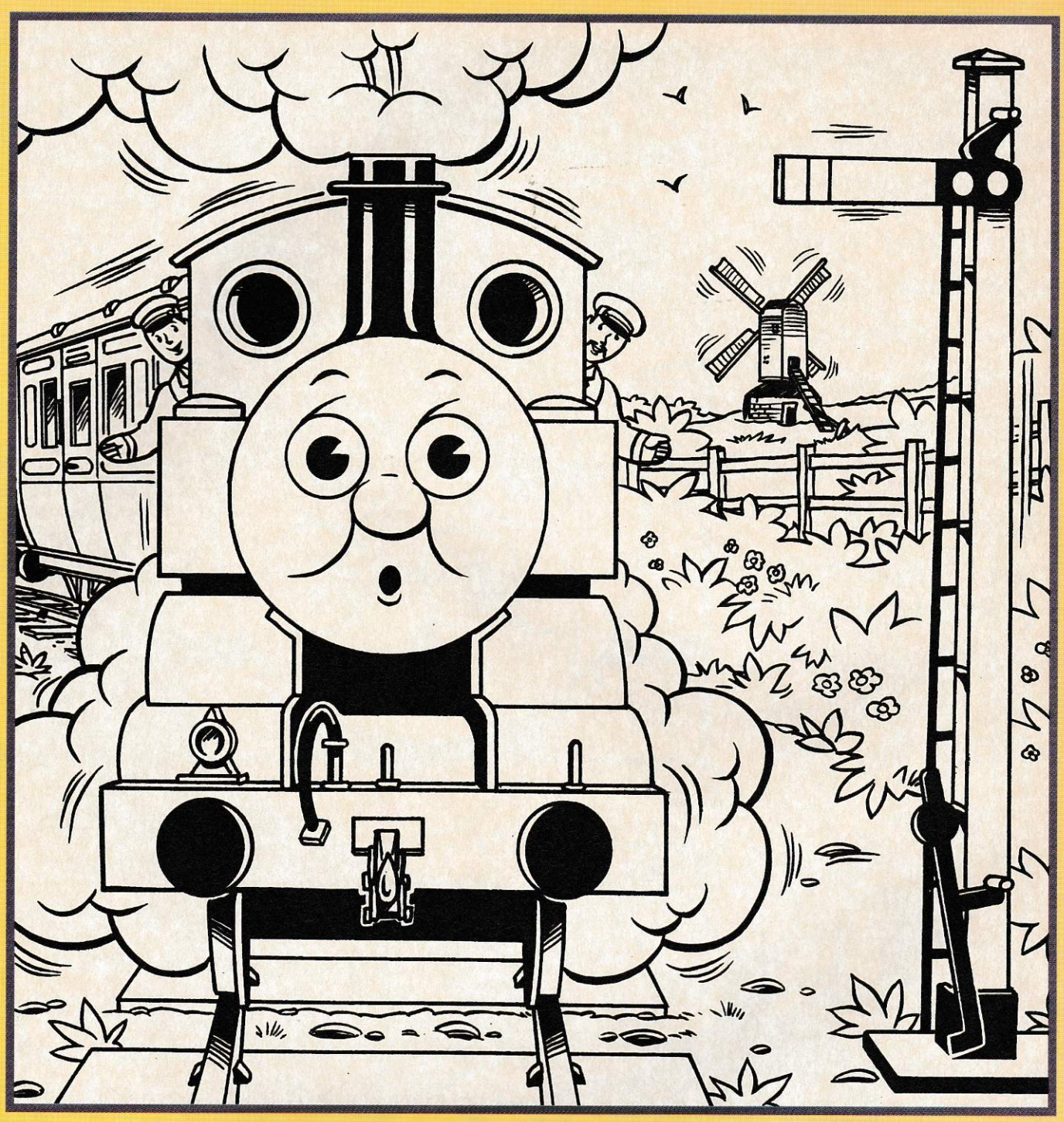
1 "Hello, Thomas!" said his driver and fireman cheerfully when they entered the shed early one morning. Thomas struggled to open his eyes. For the past two days, he had worked really hard shunting heavy trucks. He was still very sleepy. His driver and fireman were saying something about a retirement party, but Thomas was too drowsy to pay attention. "They're grand old ladies - given years of service to the railway," said the fireman, stoking up a fire in Thomas' boiler.

2 "It won't be the same without them," continued Thomas' driver. "But it's time they stopped work. One of them told me her joints creak every time she moves!" Thomas yawned again, and didn't hear who they were talking about. He only woke up properly when he was puffing along his branch line, pulling Annie and Clarabel.





3 Later, Thomas was just leaving a station when he heard some loud creaking. The noises puzzled the little engine, because he had heard someone talking about creaking that very morning. "Something to do with retiring," Thomas thought to himself, but he couldn't remember much more, because he'd been so drowsy. "Oh what was it?" he wondered.



4 Down the line, Thomas stopped at a signal by a windmill. He heard more creaking and he tried to remember what had been said, and recalled something about "Grand old ladies." Then a terrible thought struck him - it could be Annie and Clarabel! The creaking he'd heard could have been his coaches! "Not, Annie! Not, Clarabel!" Thomas whistled. "Don't retire, I'd miss you too much!" Thomas' driver chuckled. "I think," he began, "that you've got mixed up..."

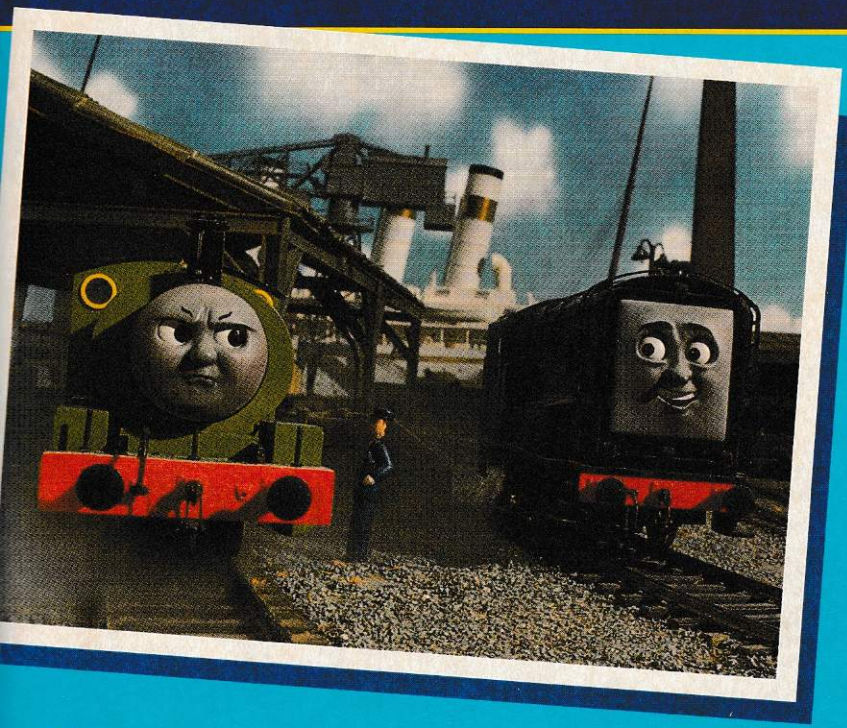
5 "...Probably because you were half-asleep this morning when we talked about the *buffet ladies* who are retiring from the next station, Madge and Flo!" Thomas' driver also explained that the creaking Thomas heard was the trees, and the windmill sails. Soon Thomas approached the next station. The retirement party had started, and so had the teasing from Annie and Clarabel! Thomas didn't mind, though - he was just pleased to know they would still be there to tease him in the future!

The end

Diesel Does it Again!

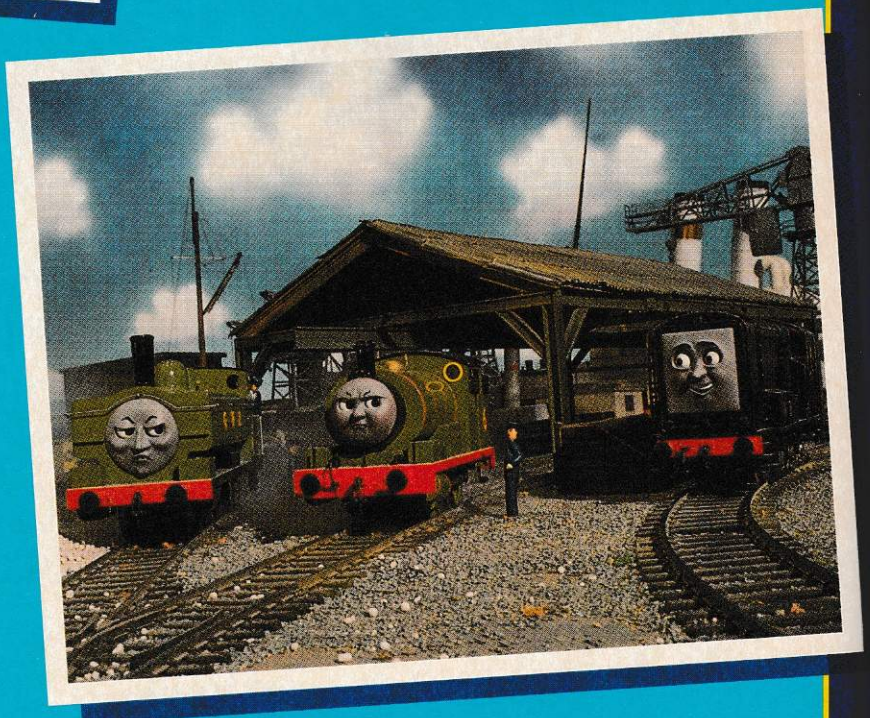
Based on *The Railway Series* by the Rev W Awdry.

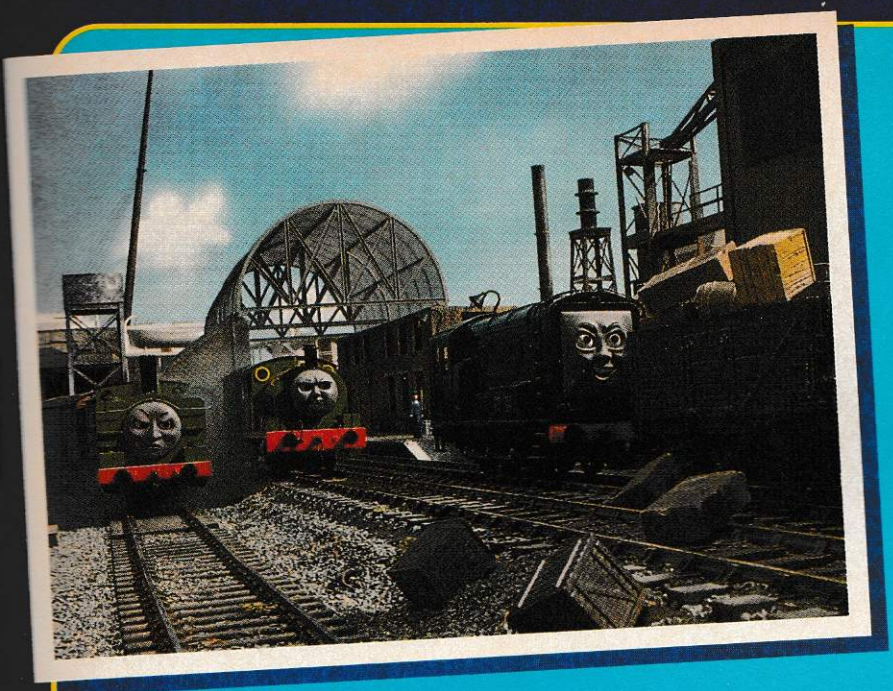
Duck and Percy enjoy working at the harbour, pushing and pulling trucks of cargo to and from the quay. But one morning, the engines were exhausted. The harbour was busier than ever. The Fat Controller promised that another engine would be found to help them.



1 The tired and aching engines waited for the other engine to arrive. But it came as a shock when he did. Diesel said "Good morning," in his oily voice. "What are you doing here?" gasped Percy. "Sir Topham Hatt sent me to shunt some trucks," Diesel growled.

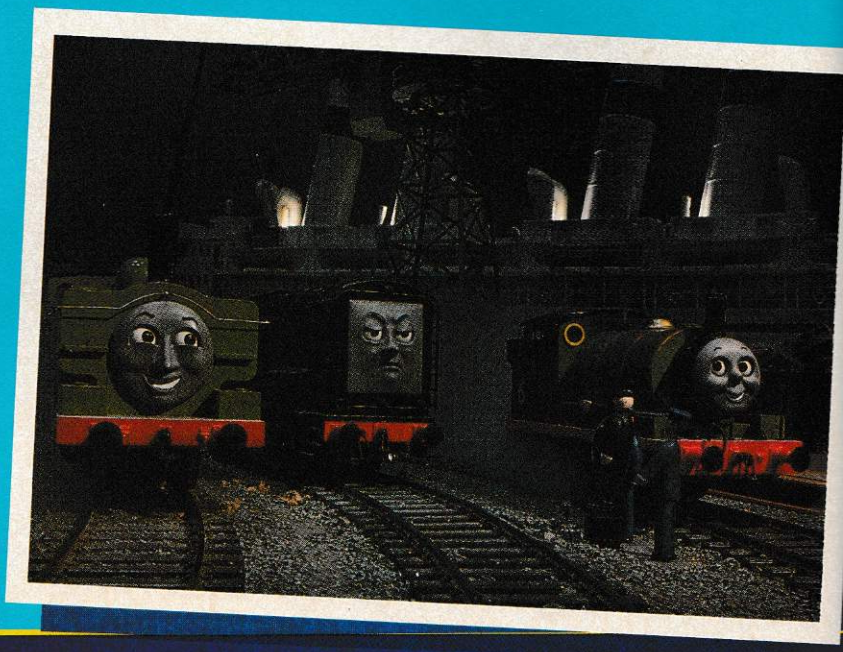
2 As if to make himself clear, he bumped some trucks hard. Percy and Duck were horrified. They did not trust Diesel and refused to work. With Diesel working alone, there was soon trouble on the railway. When the Fat Controller found out he went straight to Percy and Duck.





3 The Fat Controller told Percy and Duck to return to work. He explained that Diesel was there to help them and that he was the only engine available. They went sadly back to work. Diesel spilled a load of goods straight away, but Percy and Duck said nothing, even though Diesel was even rude to them than ever.

4 The next day, while shunting trucks full of clay, Diesel bumped the trucks right into the harbour! The Fat Controller was very angry and told Diesel to go. He asked Duck and Percy if they could handle working by themselves again. They were very happy.



In Thomas the Tank Engine & Friends next time, you can read all about Four Little Engines!

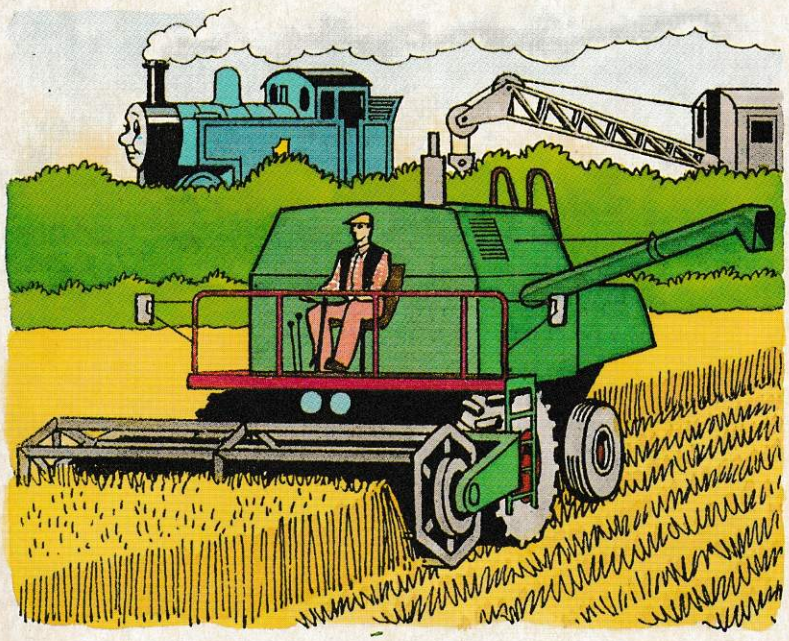
Win a model of Diesel!

Five lucky winners can win a splendid model of Diesel from the ERTL engine range! Just send a postcard, with your name, age and address to: Thomas/261 model competition, Marvel Comics, Panini House, Coach and Horses Passage, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 5UJ.

Closing date: October 23rd, 1997.

Trevor's task!

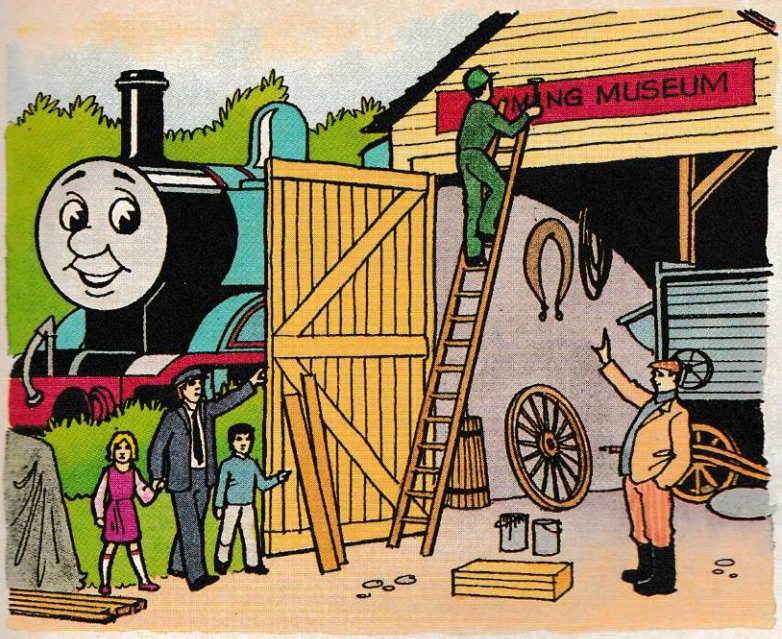
Thomas steamed along his branch line. He had a special job to do. As a treat, the Fat Controller had allowed his grandchildren, Stephen and Bridget, to have a ride on their favourite tank engine. They travelled in the guard's van. Thomas was also pulling a crane and a flat truck.



He had to slow down at a signal by the Vicarage Orchard. Trevor the Traction Engine was in his shed. "Hello, Thomas! Stop and talk!" called Trevor. "What's the news?" He looked sad.

But the signal changed and Thomas hurried away. "Poor Trevor," said Bridget, as they puffed away. "He must be very lonely, standing all by himself for weeks on end." "There's not much need for a traction engine, these days," added Thomas' guard.

Later, Thomas approached a siding by a farm. In a field near the railway line, a farmhand was driving a massive machine.

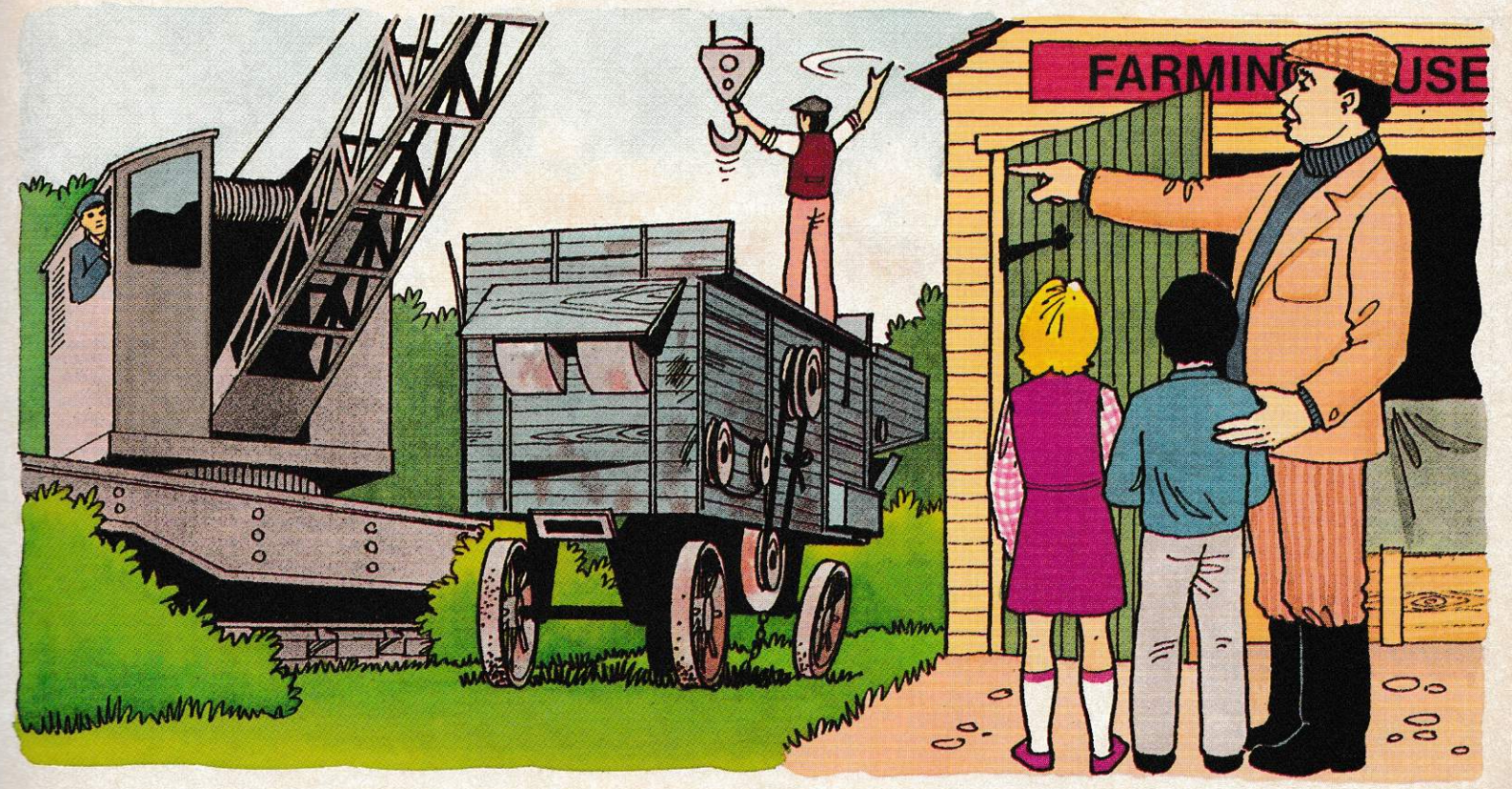


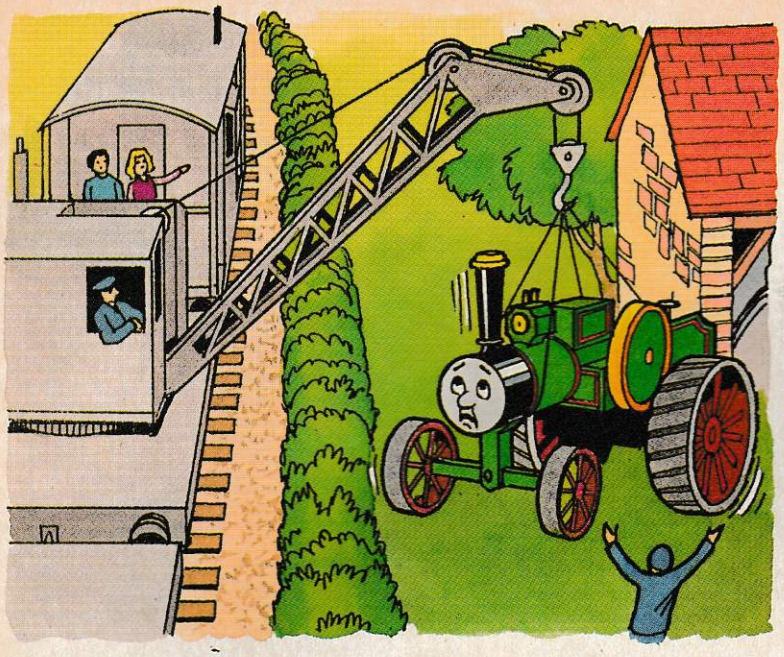
"Wow! Look! That's a combine harvester," cried Stephen. "It cuts the corn and threshes it," his sister explained.

Stephen was not sure what threshing was. But Bridget had read about it in a book. "It means separating the grain from the straw which is then thrown out the back of the machine," Bridget told her brother.

Thomas stopped near a large barn. There were lots of old machines, carts and tools inside. A crane was being used to lift a strange wooden wagon. "I've never seen a truck like that before!" Stephen told the farmer, who watched. "It's an old-fashioned threshing machine," replied the farmer. "The Fat Controller kindly offered to get it painted for my farm museum."

The children wondered how the threshing machine worked. When it was safely chained to the flat truck, Thomas set off again. He had to wait at the signal by the Vicarage Orchard again, so Trevor heard all about the threshing machine. "I suppose I'll end up in a museum, too," he





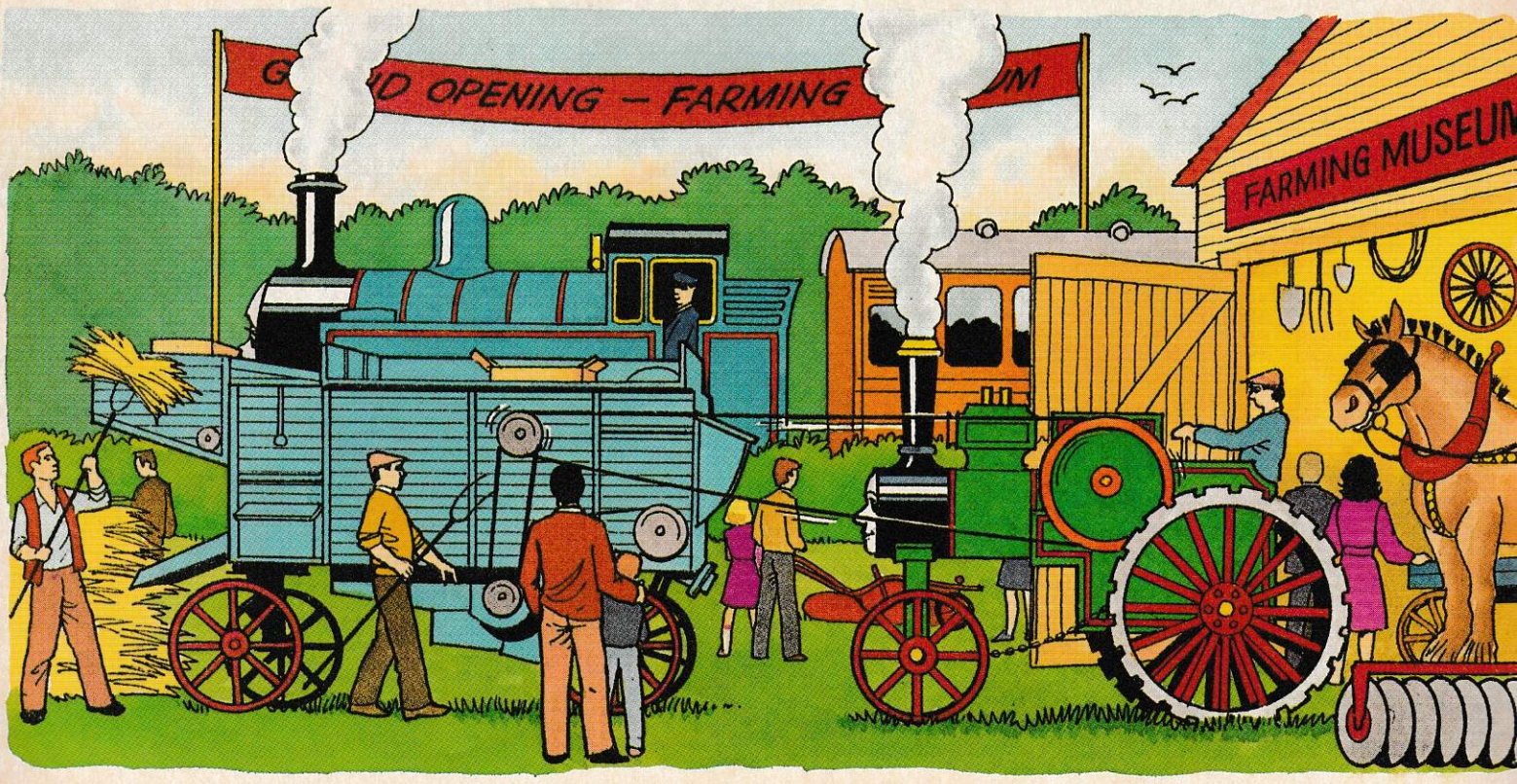
sighed. Stephen and Bridget felt sorry for poor Trevor.

It wasn't long before the farm museum was ready for its grand opening. Thomas had returned the newly-painted threshing machine. "It was once powered by a traction engine," the farmer explained to the children.

This gave the children a great idea! They told the farmer who rang the vicarage. Later, the children went with Thomas to collect Trevor on the flat truck. "You're going to a museum," the children told him. "I was right!" Trevor groaned.

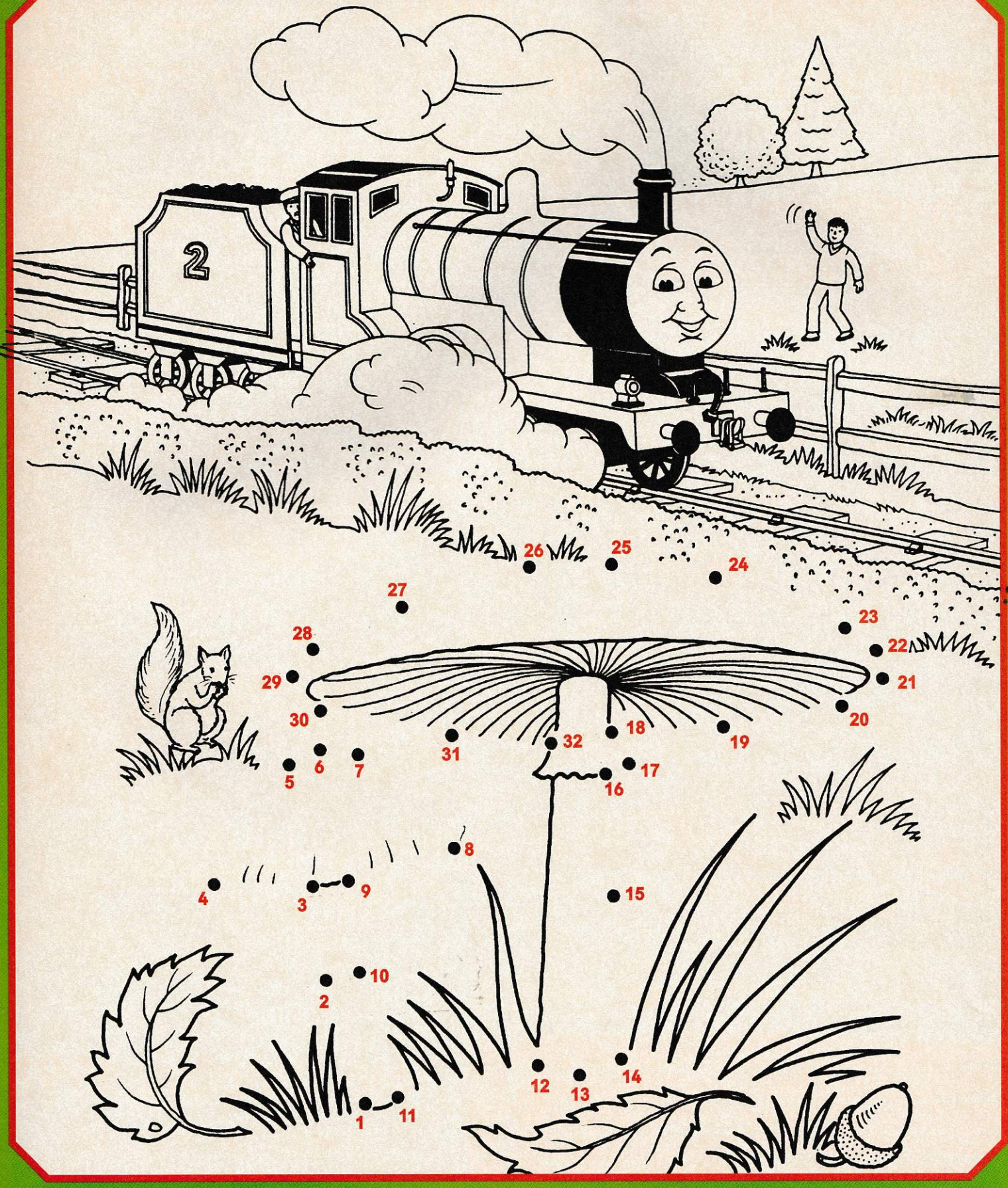
But what a surprise he had! When the museum opened, Thomas brought lots of visitors to see a special demonstration. Trevor proudly turned a drive-belt to power the threshing-machine. Now visitors could see it in action. "It's a bit like an olden-day combine harvester," said Bridget. "Being in a museum is busier than I thought!" puffed Trevor. "I suppose you'll be pleased to get back to your shed to rest," laughed Stephen.

The End



Dot to dot!

Join the dots to complete the picture below and then colour it in!



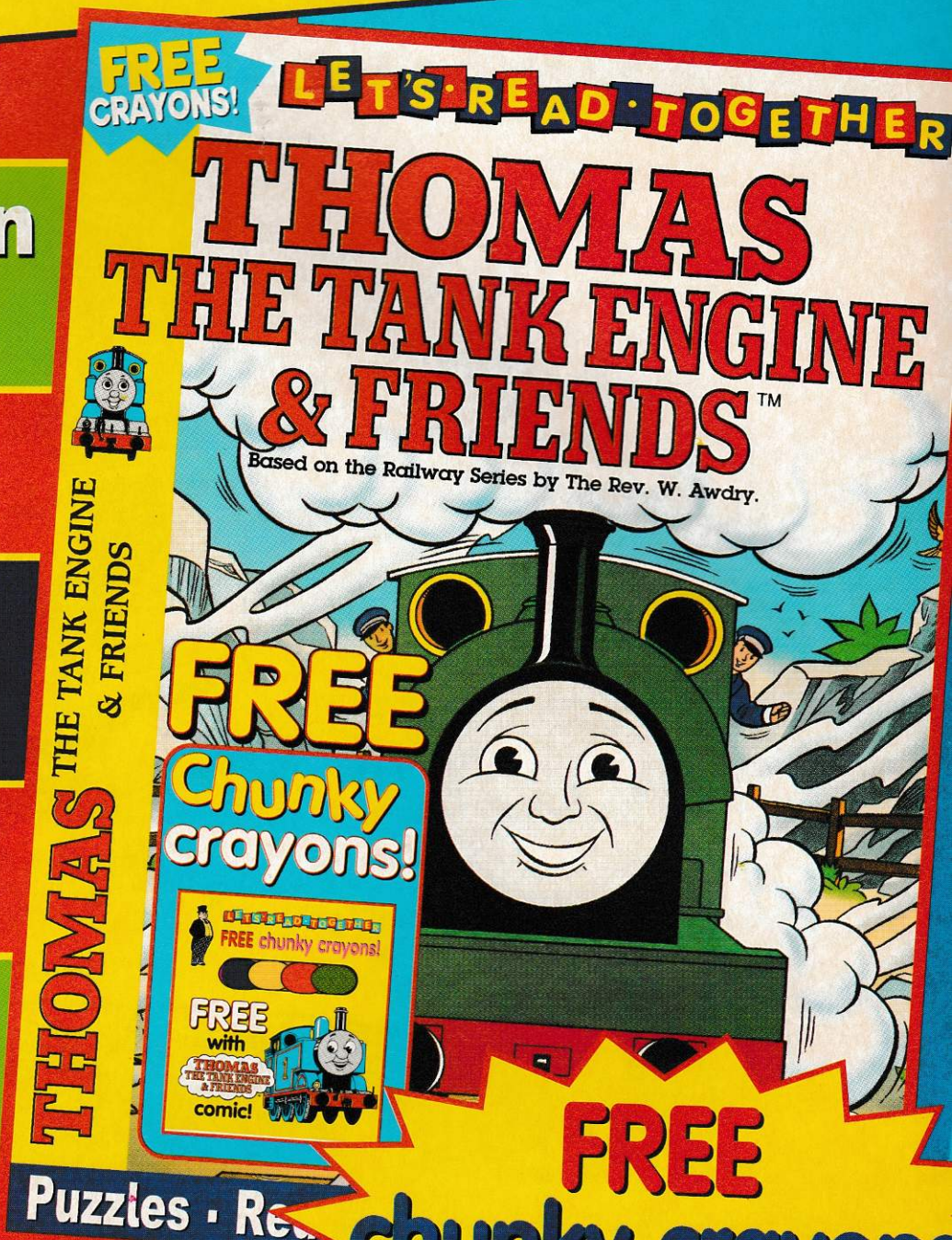
Which engine is zooming by?

In the NEXT ISSUE!

Competition fun!

Stories & puzzles!

Reading & colouring!



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To win one of these great prizes just tell us:

Which two engines are twins?

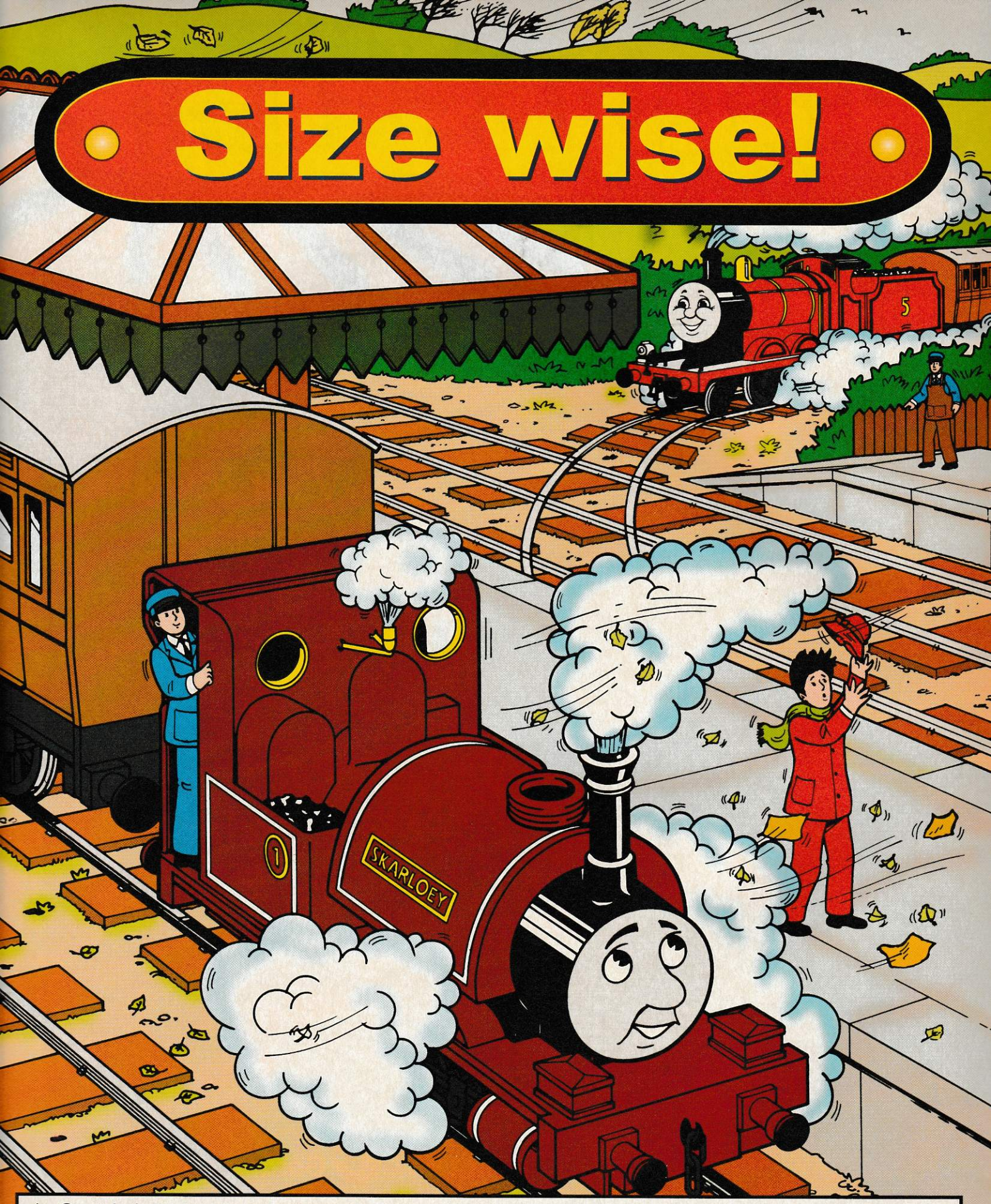
a Thomas and Percy **b** Bill and Ben **c** Gordon and James

Send your answer, along with your name & address, to: Thomas /ERTL 261 competition, Marvel Comics, Panini House, Coach & Horses Passage, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 5UJ.

All entries must be received by 23rd October 1997.

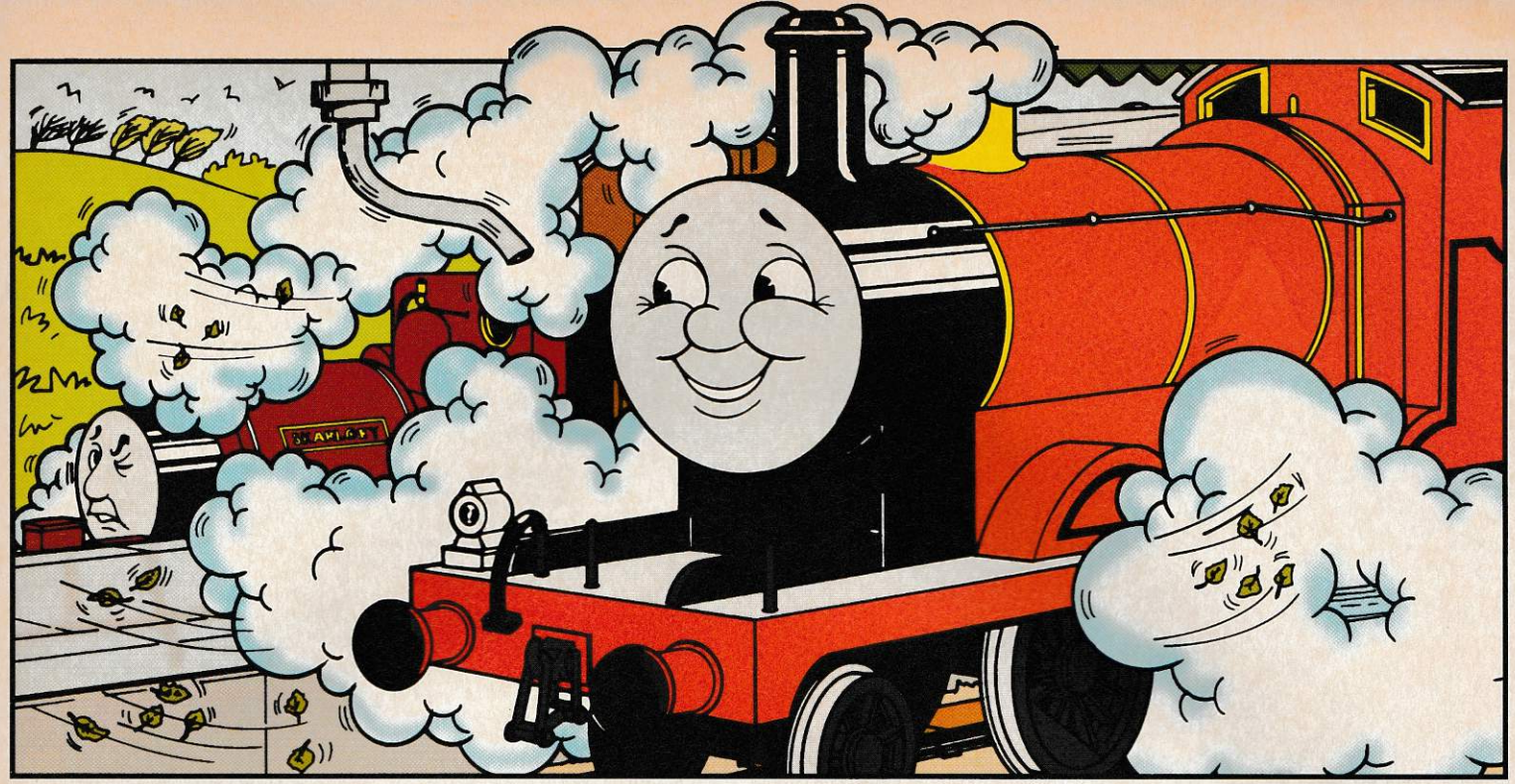
This competition is open to all readers other than employees and their families of participating companies. We cannot accept any responsibility for prizes lost or damaged in the post. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence shall be entered into.

Size wise!



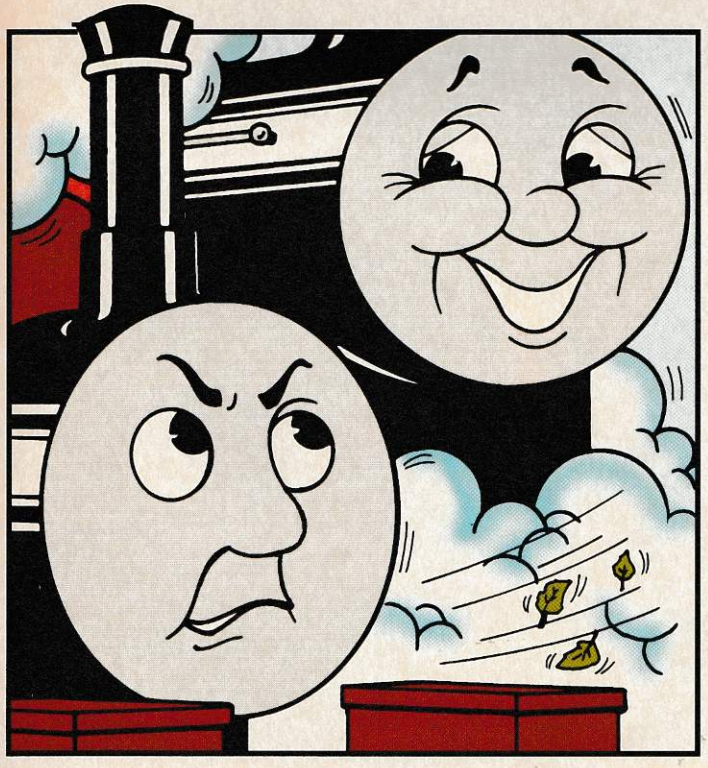
1. One bright but windy morning, Skarloey puffed happily along the little railway, enjoying the view. He soon arrived at a station that was also used by the bigger engines on Sodor.

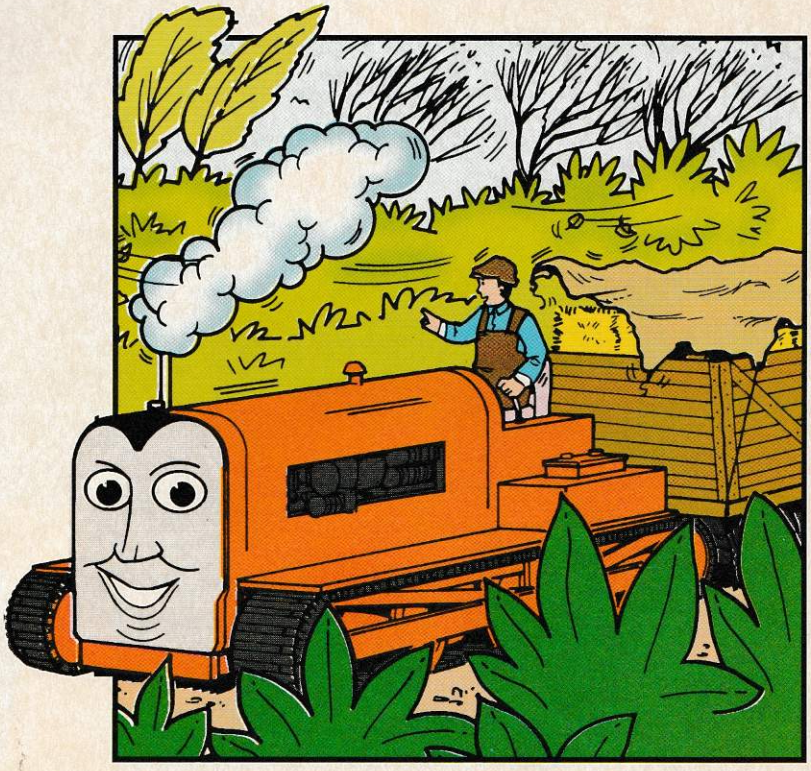
2. While Skarloey waited to collect passengers, he saw James arrive. The smart, red engine pulled up grandly alongside on a wider track. "Peep! Peep! Hello there!" he called.



3. But James didn't hear. "PHEEP!" he whistled, shrilly. The noise was deafening! Next, James puffed out thick clouds of smoke and steam that drifted all over little Skarloey.

4. He almost disappeared from view altogether! Skarloey coughed and spluttered. "Did you have to do that?" he called. "Sorry! I didn't see you down there," James scoffed.



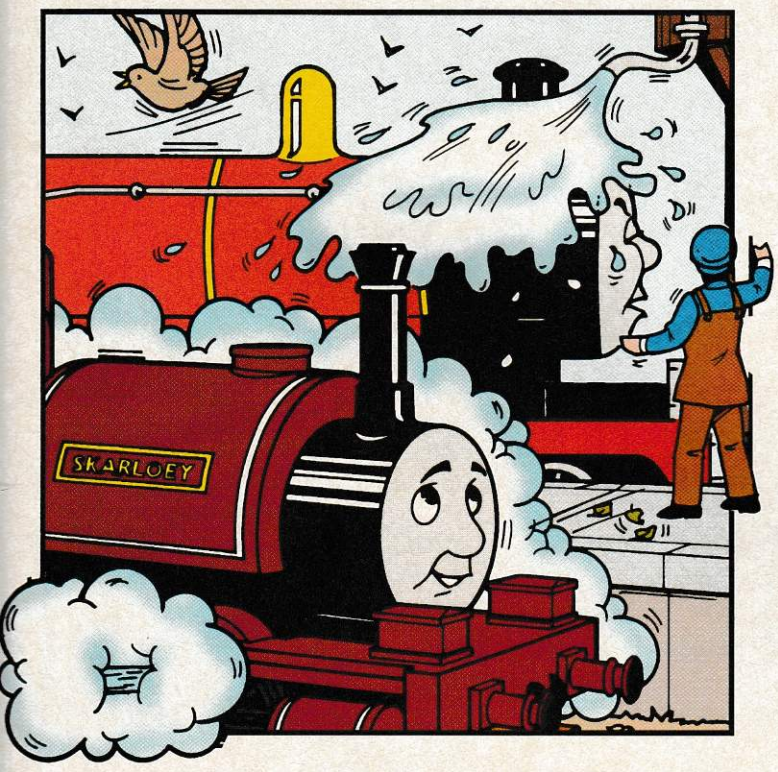


5. "It's a shame you're so small," he called, importantly. "I should hate it! I can't think of any reason why it would be Useful to be such a little engine." Skarloey fumed at the bigger engine!

6. "Cheek!" he thought, as he got ready to leave. "That James is a rude, big-buffered engine, if ever there was one!" Just then, Terence the Tractor passed by. He was pulling a cart piled with hay.

7. There was a canvas cover tied over the hay. Next moment, it came loose. The wind blew the cover into the air. "Look out!" called Terence. But the cover flew right past little Skarloey.

8. It landed on top of James. "Get it off!" he cried, crossly. "If you were smaller, that cover would have missed you," smiled Skarloey. James pulled up to take on water in quite a mood!

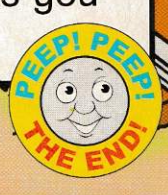


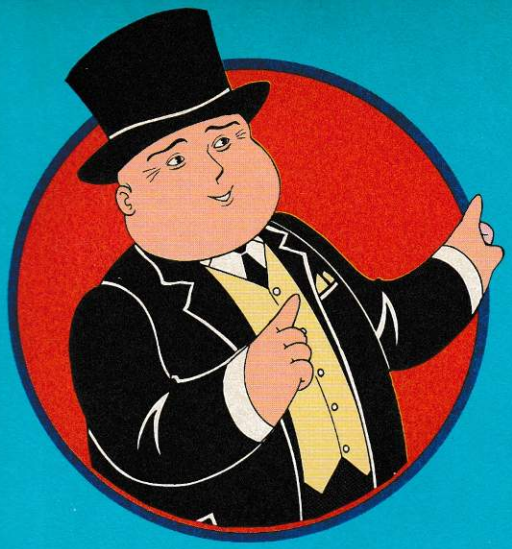
9. But the pipe slipped and water gushed out. James was soaked but not a drop touched Skarloey. "Any bigger and I'd be wet, too," he said. James dripped from whistle to wheels!

10. James quickly dried. He wanted to get underway again. But beyond the station, workmen had cleared a steep embankment. There was a huge pile of dead wood and undergrowth.

11. Suddenly, a second strong gust sent it all tumbling down across the railway lines. “Oh, no!” groaned James, who was just setting off. He braked sharply and could only stand there, helplessly. “My line’s blocked. I can’t get through!” he cried. James' driver said he would have to wait until the workmen cleared up again. But Skarloey cheekily rolled forward. “I won’t!” he thought.

12. “Stop! Where do you think you’re going?” snorted James. Skarloey did not answer. He was busy watching his narrow track. Skarloey chuffed slowly past all the mess. It brushed against his paintwork but he just squeezed clear. “See you later!” he called. “I’ve shown you three good reasons today why little engines are Really Useful! Being small gets you out of big trouble!” he called.





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Please send your letters, pictures and drawings to Mail Train, Thomas, Marvel Comics, Panini House, Coach and Horses Passage, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 5UJ.

Thank you, **Alif Kamal**, for this excellent drawing of Thomas puffing along!

Star Letter

Dear Fat Controller
Do Bill and Ben ever argue? We are twins and we argue a lot.
From Kerry and James Blunt, aged 5.

Sometimes! But usually they're too busy playing pranks to argue! The other twins on the railway are Donald & Douglas, the Scottish twins, - now they do disagree quite often!

If we print your **STAR LETTER**, you will receive a Fat Controller, Porter, Thomas, Annie and Clarabel as a prize!

Prize Poem!

Luke Taylor, aged 3, wins a prize for his lovely poem!

Hello, Thomas, what a lovely day.
Are you coming out to play?
Peep, Peep, James, don't go so fast,
You might end up in the grass.
Thomas is so fine and blue,
With a coat of paint he looks like new!

Happy Birthday

To: Mark Bradley, aged 7,
James Wallace, aged 4,
Carl Atkins, aged 3,
Michael Parker,
Laura and Michael Melrose,
Luke Edwards, aged 2,
Aaron Antrobus, aged 4,
Thomas Mills, aged 4,
Thomas Knibb, aged 5, &
Liam Moffat, aged 2!

ail train!

Anyone who has a drawing printed on this page will win a set of special Thomas Glitter Stickers.

George looks grumpy in this drawing by Christopher Muir, aged 6!

8 year old Nicholas Prepis has drawn a picture of his favourite engine, Percy!

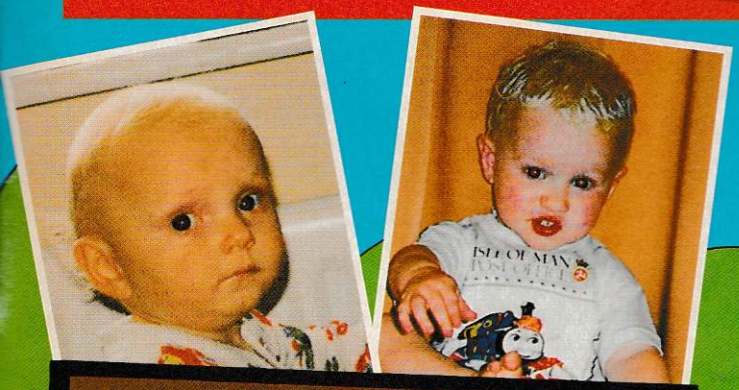
Percy's Jokes!

Have you got a favourite joke or funny story? Why not send it to Percy?

Where do bees wait for buses?
At buzz stops!
George Ronald Scott, aged 3!

Why does a rabbit have a shiny nose?
Because her powder puff is on the wrong end!
Krista Jones, aged 5!

What does a hedgehog have for his lunch?
Prickled onions!
Karen McCrimmon, aged 4!



Paul Mead, aged 1!

Ben Hands, aged 2!

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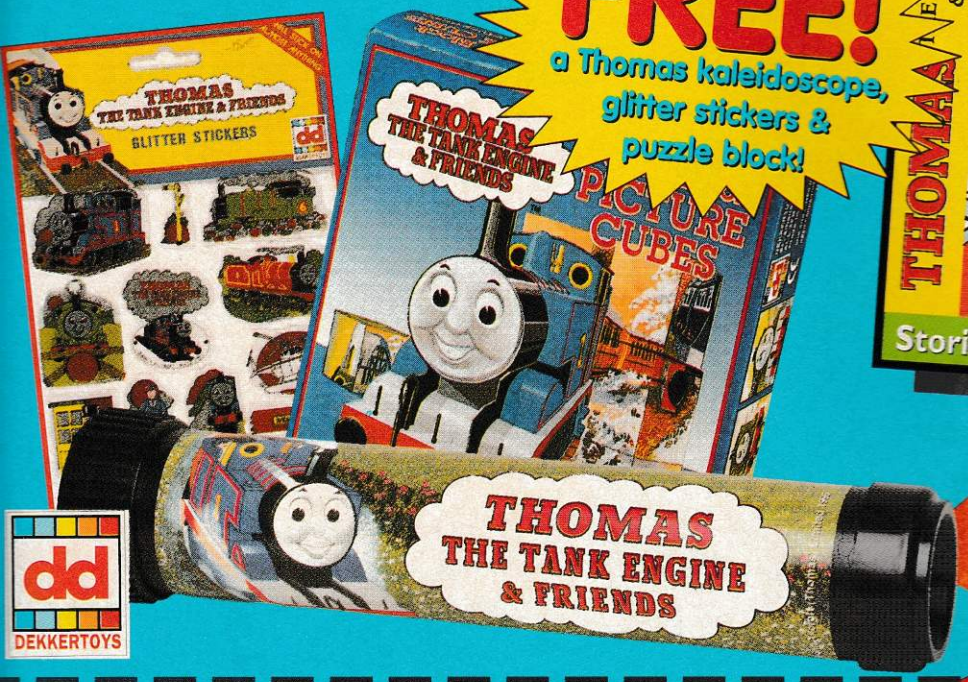

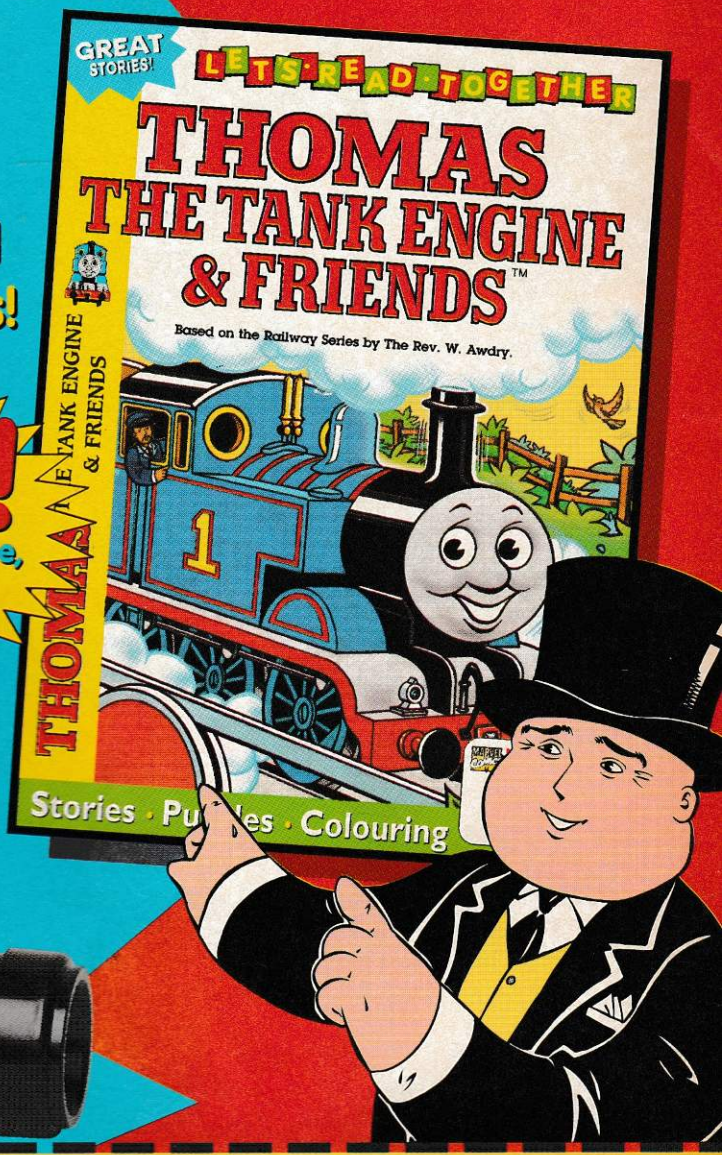

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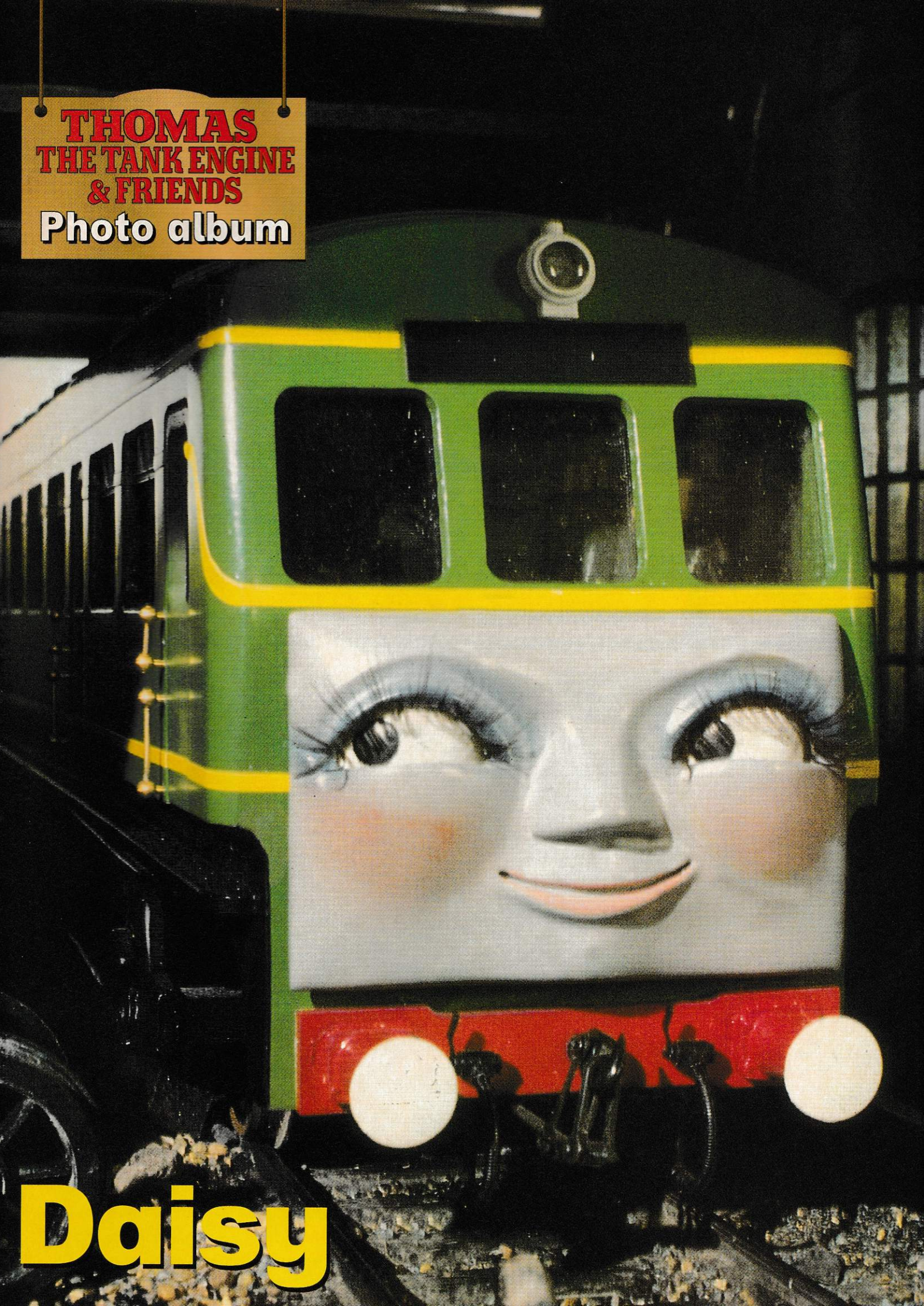
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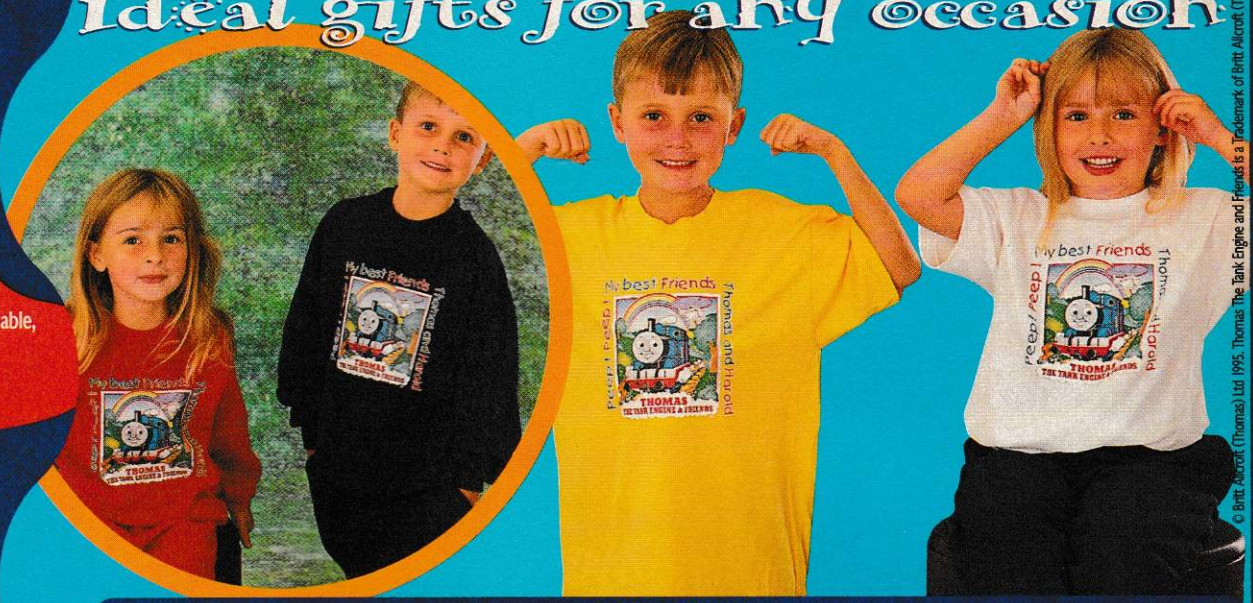

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